Anglican Christian social theory: an assessment of social welfare and the church of England in the twentieth century

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This piece of work is the result of my own work. Material from the work of others has been acknowledged and quotations and paraphrases suitably indicated. The dissertation is no more than 50, 000 words long.

CONTENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study assesses the contribution of the Church of England to social thought in the twentieth century. Its theoretical, multidisciplinary perspective highlights the motivation, ideology and theology, which has driven Anglican social involvement and works towards the construction and examination of an ideal type of Anglican Christian Social Theory against its background as a state church.

Anglican Christian social theory is a tradition of theologically grounded political thought relating Christian theology and English cultural life. This thesis explores the development of this tradition in the twentieth century by considering its embodiment in Episcopal leadership and its expression in an official Church report.

Accordingly the thesis comprises of three distinct yet complimentary studies allowing for comparisons to be drawn between the earlier and later decades of the century. First an assessment of the thought of William Temple whose ministry spanned the first half of the twentieth century and who, as an Archbishop of Canterbury, personified the theory under scrutiny. Secondly, a study of David Jenkins, Bishop of Durham, whose outspokenness on welfare issues and questioning of the role of bishops addresses the later half of the century and allows for a comparison with Temple's episcopacy. Thirdly, to account for significant social changes in leadership and social life between the 1940s and 1980s this study adds an analysis of the '*Faith in the City*' report to these studies of bishops.

Together these three topics lead to the conclusion that it is the Church's own perception of its role in the nation underlining its belief in its obligation to interact with the state that is the defining and unchanging element of Anglican Christian Social Theory. This perception on the part of those who represent the tradition highlights theology as having a central role to play in moral political thought.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACUPA	The Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas
BSR	The Board of Social Responsibility of the General Synod of the Church of England
COPEC	Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship
CSU	Christian Social Union
CUF	Church Urban Fund
ICRC	The Inner Cities Religious Council
FITC	*Faith in the City: A Call for Action by Church and Nation,* a report by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas, (Church House Publishing, London, 1985)
UPA	Urban Priority Area
WCC	World Council of Churches

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Aim and Method

The aim of this thesis is to assess the motivation, ideology and theology, which has driven Anglican social involvement in the twentieth century.

To this end this thesis will construct an ideal type of Anglican Christian Social Theory. An ideal type is, by definition, an essential representation of a particular position or phenomenon. As a social scientific construct it can be identified to varying degrees in the thought and practices of both individuals and groups and can serve as a controlling description and thus as a useful tool when undertaking a comparative study over time or distance or between different expressions of cultural values.

Anglican Christian Social Theory is a tradition of theologically grounded political thought with dual roots in the Anglican intellectual theological tradition stretching back to Richard Hooker and in the basic values of English society with its cautious response to social injustice. It is not only peculiarly Anglican, but peculiarly English and is characterised by its understanding that the Church as an established church has an integral role to play in society in general and in the formation of public welfare policy in particular.

This thesis explores the development of the tradition of Anglican Christian Social Thought in the twentieth century by considering its embodiment in Episcopal leadership and its expression in an official Church report.

The subtle and complex nature of the ideal type will require a multidisciplinary approach allowing analysis to benefit from the methodology and insights of the anthropology, history and sociology of religion as well as of theology. The broad scope of this study necessitates a theoretical rather than empirical approach utilising in depth studies from a variety of fields to draw new

conclusions and provide the intellectual platform on which a future analysis of the role of the Church in social welfare in the present day could build.

The study is divided into three distinct, though interconnecting sections. Within each section the underlying social theory is drawn out and analysed with reference to the contemporary social and political situation and theological trends. A concluding chapter identifies the common elements and assesses the extent to which the ideal type can be said to be a significant and constant feature of social theory in the Church of England throughout the twentieth century.

The natural starting point for a study of this nature is with the thought of William Temple. His thought and ministry spanned the first half of the twentieth century and as bishop and later Archbishop of Canterbury he could be said to embody the links between Church and State which lie at the heart of the social theory with which we are concerned. This is important as not only are the bishops themselves influential in the formation of social thought, but as establishment figures bridging the worlds of church and society, they are also best placed to influence its adoption by the church and its role in the relationship of Church to society. The third chapter therefore needs to address not only the later half of the century, but also to allow for a comparison of the Church's perception of the nature of the episcopacy and the eventual differences alterations in this may mean for an Anglican Christian Social Theory. David Jenkins, well known both for his outspokenness on welfare issues and his questioning of a bishop's role within the establishment is the obvious candidate. A study of his life and thought allows for an exploration of the citizen/churchman dichotomy which influences the lives of most bishops and is particularly well defined in his case, a perspective which will enrich the study by shedding light on issues of personal Christian duty as opposed to collective responsibility. In the fourth chapter, to account for significant changes in leadership and social life between the 1940s and 1980s, the study adds an analysis of the '*Faith in the City*' report[1] and the resulting follow up

[1] The Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas. *Faith in the City: A*

process to these studies of bishops. It is perhaps the most significant and well known piece of social thought produced by the Church during the closing decades of the century and this committee report serves to illustrate both the changed role of the episcopacy in the Church and the impact of a more significant role for the laity in value forming roles as well as also addressing the issue of the relative emphasis appropriately placed on individuals and collective bodies within the Church.

Anglican Christian social thought: An ideal type

The established nature of the Church of England means that the concepts of soteriology and sociology have become inextricably combined in the necessarily contextual nature of the thought and ministry of the Church. The Church has traditionally accepted responsibility for the spiritual and physical well-being of the population at a general national level and through the diocesan and parish system at a local level. This phenomenon is embodied in the episcopacy, who as individual bishops personify both spiritual and secular power, leading the Church at a national level and in the case of senior bishops taking up seats in the House of Lords, while maintaining a pastoral responsibility for the people of their dioceses.

As will be shown in the course of this study this contextual ministry of the Church divides naturally into two distinct although interconnecting dimensions, the pastoral and the prophetic and it is in the area of tension that exists between these two that Anglican Christian Social Theory is to be found. The study will assess the relative strength of these two dimensions of social theory in the thought and ministry of the subjects, but is primarily concerned with identifying the intellectual origins and motivation for the social theory expressed in this tension, as any Christian social theory must necessarily be grounded in a theology. A distinctive Anglican Christian Social Theory will reflect the essential elements of a specifically Anglican theology.

Call for Action by Church and Nation, (Church House Publishing, London, 1985). Henceforth FITC

An obvious place to start any study of the Anglican tradition is with the thought of Hooker, who is the acknowledged father of the Anglican intellectual tradition. His major work *'Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity'*[2] laid out three elements of a theological method, which have served as a yardstick for Anglican theologians ever since, namely Scripture, Reason and Tradition. Implicit in this method therefore is the understanding that the individual will use his God given faculties to interpret scripture in the light of the wisdom and learning available to him in the traditions of the Church. Far from being a dogmatic approach therefore the Anglican theological tradition allows, at least at an academic level, for an enquiring approach to theology. Perhaps for this reason an emphasis on the 'via media' or middle way has long been a defining feature of the Anglican theological tradition. A full analysis of the history and theology of Anglicanism lies beyond the scope of this study so we must be content to build on the work of scholars who have undertaken specialised studies of Anglican theology in applying their conclusions to the specific area of social thought.[3]

The Anglican emphasis on the use of critical reason and on the value of finding the 'middle way' has led to a theological tradition tolerant of diversity sustaining communal decision making processes, which rely on consensus politics to clarify doctrinal positions. Thus the doctrine commission on which William Temple served produced a document that was clearly a consensus of the thought of the day and this is a method still employed today. The implications of this perception of doctrine for the current study are important, not least because it highlights the fact that within the Anglican tradition dominant theologies may change over time and indeed be perceived differently by the different social and geographical constituencies of the Church. It may therefore be necessary to explore other dimensions of the Anglican tradition to find the unifying factor at the heart of an Anglican Christian Social Theory and it seems, given the established nature of the Church, that the answer may lie in sociological rather than soteriological constructs.

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[2] Richard Hooker, Of the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity,* (Dent, London, 1907, [1st ed. 1636])
[3] see especially S.W.Sykes, *The Integrity of Anglicanism,* (Mowbrays, London, 1978)
and A. Michael Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple,* (Longmans, London, 1960)
(with reference to the period before and during the ministry of William Temple)

The close links between Church and State have meant that the right of the Church to pronounce on political matters has, on a practical level often been taken for granted by all concerned. At an ideological level however this has been the subject of much debate. The question for this study is therefore to what extent the Church maintained this position throughout the twentieth century and how its role in welfare has developed both in its own eyes and in the eyes of others. To this end it is crucial to remain aware of the secularisation debate as a background feature to this study, but which as a sociological and theological idea will not be handled in detail except with reference to Callum Brown's thesis.

In his book *'The Death of Christian Britain'*[4] Brown challenges the dominant hypothesis which argues that secularisation has been a gradual process created by scientific and Enlightenment rationale, a by-product, so to say, of the Industrial Revolution. He argues rather that the Christian identity of Britain was alive and well in popular culture into the 1960s[5] when a change in the role of the media, new gender identities and a moral revolution smashed this image precipitating a sudden change of perception as regarded religious identity. Brown argues that this can be seen in the absence of a Christian grammar of discourse in a generation who are 'inarticulate about religion'.[6] Since this study focuses on the decades immediately before and after the dramatic shift envisaged by Brown his hypothesis may to a limited extent help to explain eventual differences between the various expressions of Anglican Christian Social Theory under discussion and will therefore be tested to a degree itself.

The extent to which Brown's thesis will prove a useful tool is however limited by the necessary concentration of this study on the self-perception of the Church as regards its involvement in social welfare. It is the contention of this thesis that a defining factor in Anglican Christian Social Theory is the firm belief in the responsibility that the Church has to the people of the nation to

[4] Callum G. Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain*, (Routledge, London, 2001)
[5] Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain, 169*
[6] Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain, 186*

speak out and act on issues of public policy, but that there are moral values which the population at large shares with the Church and which the Church therefore has a duty to defend.

Ronald Preston argues that the strong moral element evident in the British political tradition[7] is in fact derived from the Christian faith. The tradition can, he claims, be traced back to Medieval social thought, which was picked up in the nineteenth century and thereby entered twentieth century thought through such figures as William Temple, who were influenced by its nineteenth century revival. In making these observations Preston acknowledges that he is developing comments made by Reinhold Niebuhr, who while discussing the significance of England having such a radical social reformer as William Temple as Archbishop of Canterbury, made the pertinent observation that

> "...the moral protest against the injustices of our society is derived from, and need not express itself against the Christian Religion. This one fact makes Britain unique in modern social history. For all the radical movements of the Continent have been anti-Christian. In America they are not anti-Christian but they are predominantly secular. It may be that the unbroken character of the Christian ethos in Britain is also the cause of the unbroken socio-political history since 1688."[8]

In other words English social thought has always been associated with the Churches and therefore naturally, in the political arena at least, by dint of Church/ State links, with the Anglican Church. This statement supports much of what has been claimed above as to the existence of a distinct Anglican Christian Social Theory and in particular claims that such a theory is not only peculiarly English, but also that it is grounded in a particular English response to social injustice. Niebuhr notes the positive reflection on the English churches here in that they can, against the background of this theory, be seen as the moral force in society although he also goes on to point out the negative side of this approach namely that Britain may easily 'maintain many forms of

[7] Ronald Preston introduction to Willam Temple, *Christianity and Social Order,* forward by Edward Heath, introd. By Ronald Preston, (SPCK, London, 1976),
[8] Reinhold Niebuhr quoted in Ronald Preston introduction to William Temple, *Christianity and Social Order, 20*

capitalistic injustice because of her ability to mitigate them more successfully than other nations'.[9] In other words the impact of such an approach to social policy is twofold. On the one hand the Church has secured a voice in the debates of the nation concerning social reform, is able to campaign for change and her voice will be listened to both by those in power and the nation at large. On the other hand, by taking on this role of moral advisor to the nation and campaigner for limited political social reforms the Church has limited her ability to act as a revolutionary force in the nation. She has become part of the status quo. The question then arises not only of how far this can be said to have been true in the past and still be so today in general terms of Church policy, but also to what extent such an approach can be said to be part of a specific Anglican Christian Social Theory. Questions regarding the role of the Church in politics are therefore, in the light of this, more than theoretical, philosophical and theological issues, but rather have a significant impact on the formation of any Anglican Christian Social Theory and its working out in practice.

Due to the diverse nature of Anglicanism there is no one attitude to Church/ State relations within the Church of England which can be said to be definitive. Although if the central premise of this thesis, that there is a distinct line of Anglican Christian Social Theory, is to be proven it ought to be possible to identify an attitude to the relationship between Church and State which can be said to be characteristic of this social theory. Raymond Plant has outlined four distinct approaches to the relationship of the Church to politics, which serve as a useful template here. The conservative view, the first of Plant's typologies, stands in direct contrast to the line of Anglican social thought with which we are concerned, but merits some attention because of its considerable influence during the period under consideration and its open opposition to the values of Anglican Christian Social Theory.

The conservative view has since his now famous and hugely influential Reith Lectures of 1978, been personified by Edward Norman. Norman, who labelled himself along with those such as Enoch Powell as a conservative Christian,

[9] Reinhold Niebuhr quoted in Ronald Preston introduction to William Temple, *Christianity and Social Order, 20*

argues for a perception of Christianity focused on the individual. He believes that the Church should have nothing to do with governance or social provision, but should rather focus on personal morality and the salvation of individual souls. Norman is however by no means alone in espousing this approach and as we shall see during discussions of the work of David Jenkins and FITC it has been a prevalent and influential attitude particularly when combined with the individualistic political ideologies of the late twentieth century.

Apart from the conservative view outlined above Plant lists three other approaches, which he calls the Christendom view, the pluralistic view and finally the secularist view.[10] According to Plant those who espouse a Christendom view believe that it is the duty of the Church to develop a distinct corporate view on all matters and to work for the acceptance of this as national policy. The pluralistic view is held by those who see the Church as one of a number of institutions in a plural society and who believe that in politics as with other tasks relating to secular society individuals must exercise their civic rights and duties independent of the authority of the Church. Finally the secularist outlook takes the view that the Church exists within secular society although distinct from it and so should examine secular political doctrines produced by the politicians and endorse those elements most acceptable to the Christian position.

Plant goes on to argue that very little theological thinking has been done by the churches on the issues of poverty and inequality and that this needs to be rectified if the church wants to be taken seriously in the welfare sector. It needs, he argues, to better 'link its political and social ethics into a more developed theological understanding of man as a political animal.'[11] 'Until', he argues,

> "the Church takes its task of developing a political theology in the light of its own understanding of God and the God given circumstances of human life more seriously and does not just

[10] Raymond Plant, 'The Anglican Church and the Secular State' in *Church and Politics Today,* G. Moyser (ed.), (T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1985), 313 - 336
[11] Plant, 'The Anglican Church and the Secular State', 335

> fall into the embrace of one or other of [the] secular moralities, then its forays into politics are going to seem as rootless and naïve as its critics take them to be."[12]

Plant, in other words, is espousing a Church line in the tradition of Anglican Christian Social Theory, that is to say one of theologically grounded political thought, developed by the Church with direct reference to the issues of the day, without being overly prescriptive with regard to individual Christians or the State. This position is perhaps closest to his pluralistic view in that it allows for individual Christians to make up their own minds and also for the position of the Church in society as one of a number of organisations, however its emphasis on the need of the Church to develop a distinct Christian political theology and the underlying assumption of a special role for the Church in this field does not fit any of Plant's ideal types. It forms a sub-type or fifth type of its own, which could be labelled the political view.

As the work of Medhurst and Moyser has shown however this political perspective is more likely to be found amongst the educated elite who hold leadership positions in the Church than it is at the level of popular belief. George Moyser argues from the basis of empirical material that the effect of "progressively stronger levels of religious adherence is to increase, or stimulate, political participation."[13] Members of the churches are in other words more likely than the average non-religious member of the population, to be politically and socially aware and in basic terms turn out to vote. However, he continues, '... religious engagement is clearly associated with generally supportive regime attitudes.'[14] In conclusion therefore Moyser feels that it is worthwhile to note that

> "theologically inspired political dissent, with its illustrious line of ecclesiastical exponents, should in fact be most typically associated at the mass level with those most unsympathetic to traditional religious values."[15]

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[12] Plant, 'The Anglican Church and the Secular State', 336
[13] George Moyser, 'In Caesar's Service? Religion and Political Involvement in Britain', in Paul Badham (ed.) *Religion, State and Society in Modern Britain,* (The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston/ Queenstown/ Lampeter, 1989), 343-379, 362
[14] Moyser, 'In Caesar's Service? Religion and Political Involvement in Britain', 367
[15] Moyser, 'In Caesar's Service? Religion and Political Involvement in Britain', 373

This he feels shows the dangers to institutional coherence of a too critical official stance. If Moyser is correct this could go some way to explaining from a sociological perspective both the general emphasis on reform of the structures rather than radical rejection of them in Anglican Christian Social Thought as well as the more focused opposition to each of our objects of study when espousing more radical positions. The vehement opposition to David Jenkins from the catholic and evangelical wings of the church during 'The Durham Affair' as detailed in chapter three is but one example, while the opposition to FITC from conservative (and Conservative) churchgoers, discussed in chapter four, serves to confirm this impression.

Other commentators have noted this tendency while making more general observational assessments of English Church life. As FITC itself highlighted the majority of the Church of England is and has throughout its history been distinctly middleclass and frequently conservative in its politics and theology. [16] This majority which has little or no understanding of the day to day lives of the poor of the nation or of the complexities of academic theologies, as the leadership has, is therefore frequently at odds with the academic leadership. This stance is backed up by Clark who argues that one major element of the British and therefore also Anglican Church establishment is its heritage of reasonableness and cautious moderation, which he traces back to Edmund Burke.[17] If, Clark argues,

> "British people 'hold these truths to be self evident' it is not merely psychological or cultural inertia which prompt them to do so: they are inclined in this direction because of a collective history which leads them to believe that such traits have certified their value in promoting the common good."[18]

Here Clark is also in agreement with Giles Ecclestone, who while General Secretary of the Board of Social Responsibility of the Church of England wrote that the stance taken by the Church of England seems to

[16] FITC, 74, 4.5
[17] Henry Clark, *The Church Under Thatcher,* (SPCK, London, 1993), 65
[18] Clark, *The Church Under Thatcher,* 66

> "reflect a belief in the possibility of bringing about social and political change by rational argument (though not by that alone), and in the worthwhileness of incremental, piecemeal improvement."[19]

In highly appropriate understatement Ecclestone goes on to say that this is 'not fundamentally at odds with the dominant values of British society' and that the Church therefore sees the current situation of power and responsibility as entirely appropriate.[20] The tradition of critical questioning within Anglicanism, which is expressed in Anglican Christian Social Thought in the prophetic aspects of writing and ministry is, in other words, a reformist not revolutionary position tempered by the Church's establishment position and is therefore most accurately defined by Ecclestone in the phrase 'critical solidarity'.[21]

This view of Anglican social thought as basically supportive of the status quo is to a certain extent also held by John Atherton. The strand of Anglican social thought with which this study is concerned he labels the 'liberal response' as opposed to the 'radical response'. The mainstream liberal tradition is, he argues, committed to a positive function of the Church in relation to society and his assessment is worth citing at length.

> "The approach to gradual change, the state, politics and economics combine to produce a coherent programme for progressive change... Emerging out of the western churches, including through their influence on the early ecumenical movement, it advocates a leadership role for the Church in society. Unlike the radical response, it therefore assumes no discontinuity between church and society in market economies. Its task is to support the laity and citizens in the exercise of their civic responsibilities."[22]

Supporting this method there is, he goes on to say, a theological method which as expounded by Atherton serves as a reasonable explanation of the

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[19] Giles Ecclestone, *The Church of England and Politics,* (Church House Publishing, London, 1981), 40

[20] Ecclestone, *The Church of England and Politics,* 40

[21] a concept developed by Ecclestone in *The Church of England and Politics*

[22] John Atherton, *Christianity and the Market,* (SPCK, London, 1992), 163

methodology of the Anglican Christian Social Theory we are currently attempting to pin down.

> "Taking theological insights seriously, [the liberal method] also seeks to come to terms with the empirical realities of a changing context. Out of this relationship, guidelines are developed which reflect the ability of Christian beliefs to listen to society. They provide guidance for Christians in their involvement in movements and programmes."[23]

The various individuals studied below take slightly different lines on this, but the basic right and duty of the church to contribute to public debate is a characteristic of this ideal type coupled with the notion of distinct areas of expertise held by State and Church. It would be interesting to investigate how closely this attitude relates to the attitude of those in positions of secular power to the role of the Church in this sector. However this does not lie within the scope of this study and will therefore only be touched on where relevant.

In light of the above it is possible to construct an ideal type of Anglican Christian Social Theory. It is a theologically grounded political social theory which is constructed by the intellectual elite of the Church in any given period with reference to contemporary situations of social injustice. It is underpinned by values of Christian theology and English cultural life and characterised by the fact that it has been developed in the context of an established church.

[23] Atherton, *Christianity and the Market,* 163

CHAPTER 2: THE SOCIAL THOUGHT OF WILLIAM TEMPLE

William Temple lived his life at the heart of the English Church establishment and this qualification and its consequent implications for his thought, as much as his social involvement make him an obvious candidate for this study, epitomising as he does both the Anglican establishment and English social thought. Munby has said of Temple that his thought formed the basis of the welfare state [24] and how far this can be said to be true is of critical importance to this study, indicating as it does the extent of the social thought of the Church of England and the degree to which this has influenced the secular powers in the nation. It has been hypothesised in the previous chapter that the issue of the relationship of the Church of England to Welfare provision in England is as bound up with issues of Church/ State relationships and the role of the Church in the nation, as it is with issues of social welfare theory. The areas of Church/ State relations, ecumenical theory and social theory and the connections between them in Temple's thought will therefore be closely analysed in order to assess to what extent the thought of William Temple can be said to constitute an Anglican Christian Social theory.

In order to be able to make sense of his thought it is therefore of primary importance to examine both Temple's background and foundational influences on his thought and the theological method which he employed and which therefore shapes all aspects of his thought.

Background

Family

William Temple was born in 1881 son of Frederick Temple, Bishop of Exeter and later Archbishop of Canterbury. He was therefore no stranger to ecclesiastical tradition and at home, quite literally, with the practical implications of a State Church. Alan Suggate's insightful comment that

[24] Denis Munby, *God and the Rich Society,* (OUP, London, 1960),

Temple's radicalism could no doubt be said to stem from the social security of one 'to the manor born' in contrast with the conservatism of his father, born of the social insecurity of one who did not come from such a privileged home, [25] contains much truth and explains not only Temple's radicalism, but also the ease with which he related to people of every class and background. It must however be balanced against a recognition of the role played by both of Temple's parents, but particularly his father, in the formation of his character. His father's concern for education and society left an impression on the young Temple, but so did a respect for the established order and a conservatism evident in his earlier writing.

Frederick Temple had been born into a poor family, but one with distinctly middle class values and so a mixture of ambition and a willingness to take on hard work, whether physical or mental, meant that he received an education which many others did not. Despite a scholarship education at public school and then Oxford University Frederick Temple retained however a concern for the education of those who, like himself did not come from privileged backgrounds. He dedicated himself to education for some years, working for the education of workhouse boys before serving as the much loved headmaster of Rugby until his appointment as Bishop of Exeter. This sense of duty to the people's education was inherited by William Temple[26] although as his short time as headmaster of Repton shows he did not inherit his father's natural talent for teaching. William Temple's talents lay elsewhere.

Critics have said of him that he had poor judgement of people and situations, [27] but he was friendly and amicable and a reconciler of people as well as ideas and therefore much loved by a large variety of people.[28] His sense of duty combined with the fact that 'he was so privileged and secure in his own life' meant that 'once he began to gain knowledge about the conditions of the

[25] Alan M. Suggate, William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today. (Clark, Edinburgh, 1987), 15
[26] David Edwards, *Leaders of the Church of England 1828 – 1978* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1978), 316
[27] Adrian Hastings, 'William Temple' in Geoffrey Rowell (ed.) *The English Religious Tradition and the genius of Anglicanism,* (IKON Productions, Wantage, 1992), 216
[28] Edwards, *Leaders of the Church of England 1828 – 1978,* 303

people he felt free to conduct propaganda for the labour movement as his father had not felt free.'[29] In particular he became heavily involved in the Workers Educational Association, acting as president from 1908 until 1924.[30] He also joined the Labour Party in 1918 for a brief period, leaving when made Bishop of Manchester in 1921.[31]

Education

Temple's respect for and ease with the establishment came not only from his parents, but as with many of his class and generation, from his school and university education. Duncan Forrester, writing on Temple and his contemporary Christian social thinkers notes that these were intellectuals from privileged backgrounds near the centre of the establishment with an acute sense of social responsibility and the importance of the task of leadership, instilled by private schools or the more traditional universities. These thinkers, he goes on to say had

> "dual intellectual roots in the Christian tradition and in philosophical idealism, each of which reinforced their implicit assumption that they were responsible for working out, like Plato's Guardians, what was good for society and for other people."[32]

Temple's decision in 1917 to give up the living of St James's Piccadilly and take a substantial cut in salary in order to act as a full time campaigner for the 'Life and Liberty' movement, which urged reform of the Church of England, illustrates perfectly this mixture of idealism and sense of duty.

It could be questioned however quite how full time devotion to a campaign for the reform of the structures of the Church could be seen to have a social element. On the surface it seems a matter of Church politics irrelevant to the life of the common man. To Temple however this was not the case and this

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[29] Edwards, *Leaders of the Church of England 1828 – 1978,* 317
[30] John Kent, *William Temple.* (CUP, Cambridge, 1992), 17
[31] Kent, *William Temple,* 25
[32] Duncan B. Forrester, 'A Free Society Today?' in Marjorie Reeves (ed.) *Christian Thinking and Social Order – Conviction Politics from the 1930's to the Present Day.* (Cassell, London and New York, 1999), 210 – 220, 213-4

episode in his life provides a useful illustration of the synthesised nature of Temple's thought and in particular how all areas of his thought returned at some level to the issue of social concern. Owen Thomas, for example notes that

'Temple knew that the greatest weakness of the church in its witness to the social order is in its disunity, he believed deeply in the motto of the 1937 Oxford Conference on Life and Work "A divided church cannot lead a divided world." ' [33]

It is therefore because of concern for the social order and his perception of the need for a united Christian foundation for that social order Thomas claims, that concern with the unity of the wider church, manifested through Temple's ecumenical work, became such a significant feature of his life and work.[34] Structural and ecumenical issues while important at one level, could therefore, it seems, sometimes be a frustration for Temple in distracting attention away from social issues. They were important to him in so far as they improved the capability of the Church to influence social issues. A good illustration of this is a comment made by Temple on the historic episcopate.

'I am convinced that the Anglican Communion is right to maintain its insistence on the Historic Episcopate, but I am equally convinced that Anglicans think far too much – not necessarily too highly, but assuredly too often and too long - of that same Episcopate. It would be far better for us if we could take it for granted and give our undistracted thought to other matters.' [35]

Philosophical influences

[33] Owen C Thomas, 'William Temple' in William J Wolf (ed.) *The Spirit of Anglicanism.* (Moorehouse-Barlow, Wilton, Connecticut, 1979), 101 – 136, 123
[34] Thomas, 'William Temple', 123
[35] William Temple, 'Thoughts on some problems of the day', Essay 1931quoted in Thomas *'William Temple',* 126

In the light of Forrester's comment above it is interesting to note that Temple himself counted Plato along with Robert Browning and St John as one of the three formative influences on his mind. Adrian Hastings has said of him that

> "he was perhaps, characteristic of the modern Anglican theological temper, in being so much more shaped by literature and music than by theology."[36]

It is certainly true, as Ramsey notes, that Temple came to theology through philosophy in stages, an observation which leads Ramsey to comment that Temple's theology was 'like that of an amateur'[37] but how far this can be said to be a modern Anglican trait remains to be seen. More important for an understanding of Temple is, in Ramsey's opinion, the fact that 'Religious experience was for him the experience of anything and everything. 'He was thus', Ramsey goes on to say, 'theologian by temperament and intuition.'[38] As although Temple may have had doubts regarding orthodox tenets of faith, including doubts regarding the Virgin Birth, which led to the Bishop of Oxford refusing to ordain him in 1906, he seemed never to have doubted the existence of God or Christ.[39] Faith seemed natural, even obvious to him.

Temple found the 'principle integrating faith, reason and life' in the Johannine Logos teaching and it was with St John that he felt at home. He saw the grounds of this principle in Plato[40], but without the incarnation it could only be philosophical conjecture. Temple believed that there was more to it than this. Just how the sacramental relationship between spirit and matter and its expression influenced and fitted with Temple's worldview will be expanded upon later, but for the present it is sufficient to note that for Temple the emphasis on self, the departmentalisation of spheres of life and the concern with personal piety, which was the focus of reformation thinkers and has since dominated Christian thought was destructive both of Christianity and society.

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[36] Hastings, 'William Temple', 213
[37] A. Michael Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple*, (Longmans, London, 1960), 146
[38] Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple*, 147
[39] Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple*, 147
[40] Robert Craig, *Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple,* (Victor Gollancz, London, 1963), 27

Temple was, according to Craig, a born reconciler of men and of ideas[41] and this trait is no doubt what drew him to Johannine teaching and meant that he felt at home with it. Synthesis and fellowship were central to his thinking. In his own words

> "life cannot be fully integrated about the self as centre; it can only be fully integrated when it becomes God centred."[42]

Whether or not Temple was a born reconciler, however, the impact of his university teachers and of Edward Caird in particular must not be underestimated. Temple himself referred to Caird as the teacher who most influenced him[43] and it was through Caird, who regarded Hegel's idealism as "Christianity theorised",[44] that Temple experienced Hegel and learnt to use a dialectical method[45] and believe in a plan to history [46]and the interconnected nature of all things. So Temple could say in the Gifford Lecture, *Nature, Man and God* that 'any distinction of spheres as belonging respectively to natural and revealed religion or theology'[47] must be rejected while in terms of the academic life philosophy and theology should act in tension not conflict.[48]

Social influences

In light of the above it is therefore unsurprising to learn that Caird's influence on Temple was more than academic. Caird was deeply concerned about social reform and encouraged pupils to spend time in the East End of London to see the situation for themselves. Beveridge and Tawney, close friends of Temple, were amongst those who took the opportunity, while Temple himself later spent some time at the Oxford Medical mission.[49] Temple saw in Caird's social concern the outcome of his philosophical conclusions and both learnt from and was influenced by this approach.

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[41] Craig, *Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple, 13*
[42] Craig, *Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple, 45*
[43] Craig, *Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple, 11*
[44] Craig, *Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple, 11*
[45] Suggate, *William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today*, 17
[46] Craig, *Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple, 57-8*
[47] Temple, William *Nature, Man and God,* 16
[48] Craig, *Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple, 11*
[49] Suggate, *William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today*, 17

In addition to the mentoring of Caird in the area of social concern, Temple was influenced by the tradition of Christian Socialism espoused by such men as F.D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley and later by Charles Gore and Henry Scott Holland. This movement was far from united and in particular a split grew up illustrated by the different approaches of those such as Headlam, who founded the Guild of St Matthew in 1877 based on his own brand of 'aggressive sacramental socialism',[50] and Gore, Scott Holland and Westcott who, in founding the Christian Social Union, aimed to study together how to apply the morals and principles of Christianity to the social and economic pressures of the time.[51] While at Oxford Temple joined the Christian Social Union and though there is an element of sacramentalism evident in his thought it is this line of Christian social thought that is found reflected in his work. His focus on the principles of Christianity and common learning can, in particular, be seen as crucial elements in his social thought. It remains to be seen how far the paternalistic attitude with which many have charged the movements of this period entered Temple's thought, but it is certainly safe to say that the general approach of the movement was adopted by Temple if not its policies and methods.

Method

For William Temple, it seems, theology was in itself a method, a way of looking at things and how this can be said to be true is clear if Temple's worldview is examined. As Craig has noted 'The two strands in Temple's genealogy', namely his father and Caird, 'appear in his personality and teaching – a basic conservatism and a liberal outlook in constant equilibrium and, at times at least, in strong tension,'[52] the conservatism mainly manifesting itself as a propensity to believe virtually without question. The conviction that underlies all of Temple's thought and writing is that in order to succeed in

[50] Suggate, *William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today*, 21
[51] Suggate, *William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today*, 21
[52] Craig, *Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple, 12*

understanding or doing anything it has to be set in a framework of Christian faith.

Temple was interested in the debate over faith and reason, but in no way saw these two as diametrical opposites, for him it was clear that there is one principle of faith in reason and reason in faith and the two cannot be separated. He thought of his own writings as works rather of theological philosophy than philosophical theology the difference being in the starting point or method used. Theology, for Temple, begins with a 'faith assumption' about God, while philosophy assumes nothing except the reliability of reason applied to experience. Belief is in other words held independent of scientific enquiry and forms the base for everything, but it can be the subject of scientific enquiry, the method difference lies in where supreme truth is seen to be. Temple himself addresses this issue directly in his *'Nature, Man and God'* stressing that a belief in God based on experience is not coterminous with the belief of the scientist in any one law of nature, but rather with his firm conviction in the supremacy of truth. [53] If, Temple goes on to say, the scientist were asked to explain why he gives precedence to the Truth over all things he would find it hard to explain, but it just seems reasonable to him, the same is true, he implies, for the existence of God to the believer.

So, in short, Temple's method is one of theological philosophy, a basic assumption that God is in all things and all things are in God.

It has been made clear that Temple saw God as the basis of all things, but the second factor in his method is the notion of synthesis implicit in the statement above, but which needs some explanation. Just as he rejected a separation between natural and revealed religion, Temple believed in a synthesis of philosophy, theology and social concern. In practical terms therefore his aim as an ecumenist and as a domestic politician was, to ensure religion formed the base of society. In contrast to the teachings of classical Lutheranism Temple

[53] Temple, *Nature, Man and God,* (Macmillan, London, 1934), 410

believed that both State and Church are divinely ordained.[54] They are, in other words, two different areas of work and though the nation states are to him part of a spiritual kingdom, it is not the role of the Church to act as political authority, but rather as 'a source of spiritual energy to all political authorities.'[55] The Church should in other words be the soul of the country and be prepared both to support the State when the latter is acting morally and to challenge when not. The State is, Temple wrote in *Christianity and the State,* a 'necessary organ of the national community, maintaining, ...the universal external conditions of a social order.'[56] It is the most indispensable organ of man's common life, 'more indispensable even than the Church.'[57] So God is in the workings of the world, not just the Church and the Church and State should work together for the benefit of the community. This unifying method Temple himself saw as being grounded not just in his belief in God, but also in his Englishness, and his words bear repeating:

> "whether logical or not, the English method has always been to enjoy all kinds of excellence together as far as possible, retaining the glamour and unifying influence of monarchy with the steadying influence of hereditary aristocracy while welcoming the progressive influence of democracy... The Church of England, like other Churches has often failed to be completely Christian – always indeed, if we take those words in all their proper depth of meaning; but it has never failed to be utterly, completely, provokingly, adorably English"[58]

Temple's method can therefore be said to be one of Anglican theological philosophy. It is a method in which faith, reason and life were integrated in the one basic assumption that God is the basis of all things, a method which he applied to both the theoretical and the practical, the individual Christian's faith and collective Christian responsibility.

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[54] Craig, *Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple,* 96
[55] William Temple, *Christus Veritas*: an essay, (Macmillan, London, 1924), 265
[56] William Temple, *Christianity and the State.* (Macmillan and Co, London, 1929), 122
[57] Temple, *Christianity and the State,* 126
[58] William Temple, 'What Christians stand for in the Secular World' in A.E. Baker (ed.), *Religious Experience and other Essays and Addresses by William Temple,* (James Clarke & Co, London, 1958), 243-255, 88 - 90

In today's pluralistic society Temple's assumption that there can be universal agreement on basic principles seems ambitious at best, unrealistic at worst, but it cannot be doubted that for Temple the absolute priority was the application of theory formed by his method as outlined above to the social order. As Temple himself wrote in *'Christianity and Social Order'*

> "There is scarcely any more urgent task for the Church than that this whole complex of problems should be thought out afresh and it is obviously a task which can be successfully undertaken only in the closest relation with the experience of those who are exposed to the daily pressures of the economic and political struggle."[59]

This is a succinct summary of what Temple saw as the primary task of the Church in society and therefore the basis of his social theory. However one further issue must be examined before this is unpacked in detail, namely the charge of paternalism, much associated with the social welfare policies of both Church and State in the Victorian era, but not infrequently levelled at the Church in response to social policies formulated by well meaning churchmen and women for others. As Forrester has commented it is difficult for an intellectual elite to 'envisage or advocate radically changed power relationships, or take active steps to empower the marginalised.'[60] Temple, with his desire to solve the ills of society could at times be charged with paternalism and for the purposes of this study it is interesting to see how far Temple and other Anglican Christian social thinkers succumb to such an approach, subscribing to Forrester's theory that such an approach is formed by and deeply rooted in an upbringing in and close relationship to the English establishment. Suggate has said of Temple that

> 'He never suffered from any sectarianism and he largely overcame any paternalism, but the search for an adequate way of relating the Christian faith and Social order was lifelong'[61]

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[59] in Suggate, *William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today*, 74
[60] Forrester, '*A Free Society Today?*', 214
[61] Suggate, *William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today*, 23

Nevertheless his situation at the heart of the English establishment left Temple with a sense that not only should he do something about the state of the nation, but that the Church itself had a similar responsibility. Suggate suggests above that he never resolved this issue to his satisfaction, but the direction that his thought took in terms of what he saw to be the responsibilities of both Church and Christian individuals and how this related to the obligations and services of the State forms, nonetheless, the basis of a distinctly Anglican Christian social theory and will now be outlined and explored from this perspective.

Temple's Christian Social Theory

As has been shown above the characteristic element of Temple's thought is its focus on synthesis, this means that while it is relatively easy to give a basic sketch of the whole of Temple's thought it is more difficult to single out specific elements under subject headings.

For Temple, the man confident in his faith, everything in life comes back to the individual relationship to God. In other words salvation is intimately connected to the divine human relationship. This said however this means in no way that Temple believed that salvation is a purely personal concern. On the contrary Temple stressed the fact that man is a social being and not meant to live in isolation. Personality is developed in the tension between the collective and the individual and it is here that salvation is worked out. Salvation is collective, but dependent on the actions of individual Christians. Not that Temple believed in a salvation by works, but rather he emphasised the communal nature of Christianity and the obligations men and women have to one another under God and as creatures whose own 'wholeness' depends on focusing on God, not self.[62] Relationship to God and fellowship with other human beings are therefore paramount. This said, individual Christians therefore need to have a heightened awareness of the needs of the whole world and the part that they can play in this. To this end Temple stressed the need for intermediate

[62] William Temple in Craig, *Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple,* 45

communities. That is the role of local communities in contributing to both personal and communal wellbeing. It is, he wrote, only in his relationships to both God and neighbour that a man can fully develop personality and, he continues,

> "The richer the personal relationships, the more fully personal he will be. This point has great political importance; for these relationships exist in the whole network of communities, associations and fellowships...If then it is the function of the State to promote human well-being, it must foster these many groupings of its citizens."[63]

The state should in other words strengthen and value local communities and organisations as should both the Church and individual citizens.

As Temple himself has commented he saw no need to differentiate between natural and revealed theology and we see this most clearly here, the word of God being lived out in the world by individual Christians. Temple himself saw the theological basis for this most clearly in the Johannine Logos teaching, 'The word was made flesh'. As Craig has noted,

> "the root of Temple's view of the relation between the Christian faith and the social order is in this sacramental view of the relation of spirit to matter."[64]

In the blending of divine and human at the eucharist, Temple believed, the materialist nature of Christianity becomes clear.[65] This is more than symbolism for Temple as, as Preston has argued, it indicates a 'positive attitude towards this world which must follow from the belief that 'the Word was made flesh.''[66] Temple liked to stress that Christianity is the most materialistic of the world's religions, by which he meant that it is concerned with practical issues. Craig summarises Temple's position thus:

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[63] William Temple, *Christianity and Social Order,* forward by Edward Heath, introd. By Ronald Preston, (SPCK, London, 1976), 71-2
[64] Suggate, *William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today*, 16
[65] Craig, *Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple,* 117
[66] Ronald Preston introduction to Willam Temple, *Christianity and Social Order*, 11

> "In the bread and wine we see ourselves as members of Christ's body inescapably involved in modern industrial society with its questions of production, profit, consumption, of working and housing conditions, as objects of our immediate Christian concern."[67]

Through this theology therefore Temple believed he could justify the involvement of Christian men and women in the social and political issues of the day. He saw the role of the Church as exposing both spiritual and physical injustice in this context. On the issue of unemployment for example Temple was eager to stress not only the physical hardships that accompany lack of employment, although he knew these were real enough, but also stressed his belief that not being wanted can be worse than physical need and alienate the unemployed from the common life.[68] The Church is not wholly world denying nor world accepting, but rather world changing in Temple's eyes. It has in Craig's words a 'prophetic vocation' for, he argues, to Temple sacramental and prophetic have the same meaning.[69] Temple may not have labelled his stance as prophetic himself, but he has not infrequently been held up as an example of that ideal type of 'prophetic' ecclesiastical leader. Medhurst and Moyser, for example, in their work on Church and Politics, note that despite his establishment background Temple was 'disposed to exercise the more 'prophetic' form of Christian Ministry which draws attention to social injustice.'[70]

The focus of much of the last few pages has been on how Temple saw the role of the Church as an institution and it is often assumed when social thought and intervention is spoken of in relation to Christianity that what is meant is the Church as institution intervening, usually through its priests and bishops. Temple himself once remarked when Archbishop, only half in jest, that when people say that the Church should do something, what they really mean is that the Archbishop should do something! Personally he thought this to be a false representation both of the present situation and the situation as it should be.

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[67] Craig, *Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple,* 117-8
[68] see Suggate, *William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today,* 95-6
[69] Craig, *Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple, 87*
[70] Kenneth Medhurst, and George Moyser, *Church and Politics in a Secular Age,* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988), 90.

'Nine-tenths of the work of the Church in the world is', he remarked, ' done by Christian people fulfilling responsibilities which are in themselves not part of the official system of the Church'[71] This takes place both through ordinary human relationships and in the work of Christian individuals in their capacity as citizens with responsibility for political and economic decisions and with the relevant expertise.[72] This, Temple thought, should continue and be built upon and that it is not the role of the Church to 'commit itself to any particular policy'[73] as policy should always depend on technical expertise. The Christian does not necessarily have such expertise. The obvious question then is what is the role of the Church to be if its members are to make political and economic decisions as individuals and not follow a particular Church 'line' or policy?

The answer to the question posed above lies once again in Temple's emphasis on the interconnected nature of all things. When editor of the Pilgrim in 1920 he wrote, ' A religion which offers no solution to world problems fails to satisfy; a scheme of reconstruction apart from religion, strikes cold and academic.'[74] Christian thought is in other words essential to the well-being of the whole nation according to Temple and over the next few years he developed his thought as to how this contribution by the Church should best be made. In an article in 1923 Temple outlined three possible attitudes of a reforming mind. The first was a stress on the organic and evolutionary nature of society, the second the conception of an ideal system followed by steps taken to realise it and the third, which Temple believed to be the method of Christianity, that of principles.

There are Temple believed 'ascertainable principles of conduct which are always valid and should be applied in every phase of life.'[75] and it was for him beyond doubt that this should be the method of Christianity as 'The Gospel being a proclamation of the true nature of God and Man and of the true relationship between them, necessarily consists of principles from which some

[71] Temple, *Christianity and Social Order*, 39
[72] Temple, *Christianity and Social Order*, 40
[73] Temple, *Christianity and Social Order*, 40
[74] Suggate, *William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today*, 32
[75] Suggate, *William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today*, 32

others may with perfect security be deduced...'[76] The Church is, he wrote in 'Christianity and the Social Order',

> "committed to the everlasting Gospel ... it must never commit itself to an ephemeral programme of detailed action. But this repudiation of direct political action does not exhaust its political responsibility. It must explicitly call upon its members to exercise their citizenship in a Christian Spirit."[77]

The aim of the church in formulating these principles is therefore to provide a Christian interpretation on which a citizen can base his or her actions.[78] So while individual citizens have a moral responsibility to act in a Christian spirit, the Church has a role to play in supplying a system of principles.[79]

These principles are for Temple, it must be remembered, distinct from absolute rules, for although he believed that there could be universal agreement he did not equate this with obligation. As he wrote in Nature, Man and God, 'I do not myself believe that there is any rule of conduct, strictly so called that is of universal obligation... But though there is no universal rule of action there are universal principles to be applied in action.'[80] They are also distinct from policies and Temple's attitude here is well summarised in his review of the Malvern conference of 1941.

> "The concern of Christians, as such, is with principles and not with policies, except to see that these conform to, and do not ignore or defy, right principles. The constant proclamation of principles is the only way; and a genuinely effective way; of fulfilling this responsibility."[81]

In 1923 Temple sketched four social principles on which he believed universal agreement could be reached. The very fact that Temple believed that there could be universal agreement on a set of moral principles says much about Temple's own philosophy as well as his understanding of the British society as

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[76] Suggate, *William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today*, 33
[77] Temple, *Christianity and Social Order*, 41
[78] Temple, *Christianity and Social Order*, 43
[79] Temple, *Christianity and Social Order*, 43
[80] quoted in Suggate, *William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today*, 126
[81] Temple, Malvern Conference 1941, 218

having a Christian basis and his assumption that the moral understanding of the common man is analogous with that of the church. Temple's successors, influenced by an increasingly plural society would not feel able to make such statements. To what an extent this type of worldview is integral to or even formative of an Anglican Christian Social Theory and to what extent it is influenced by cultural shifts outside the boundaries of the Church are therefore crucial questions and will be further analysed in subsequent chapters. For now however we will pursue an analysis of Temple's four social principles.

They are as follows, firstly freedom; or respect for personality, secondly fellowship, thirdly the duty of service and finally the power of sacrifice. Generally speaking these principles formed the basis of all of Temple's social thought throughout his life although they were subject to some not insignificant modification. In later works he cites only three principles mentioning the role of self-sacrifice as significant in personal relations, but as a personal choice and not a general principle or duty. A man can in other words choose to sacrifice what he has, even if he has only the bare minimum, but should not be compelled to do so and should not force that standard on others, particularly those dependent on him.[82] This movement in Temple's thought away from an emphasis on self-sacrifice coincides with a focus on Justice and marks, in Craig's opinion, a development in his thought.[83] Temple himself notes in *Christianity and Social Order* that it may have seemed strange to some for him not to include the principles of Love and Justice as primary Christian social principles[84] but argues that

> "These two great principles then – Love and Justice – must be rather regulative of our application of other principles than taken as immediate guides to social policy."[85]

Nonetheless a clear shift can be seen in that where he once emphasised fellowship and service above all else, he writes in 1942 that

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[82] Temple, *Christianity and Social Order,* 77
[83] Craig, *Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple,* 102
[84] Temple, *Christianity and Social Order,* 78
[85] Temple, *Christianity and Social Order* 79-80

> "Freedom must not be pursued in ways which offend against Love, nor must service be demanded, or fellowship in any actual instance promoted, in ways that offend against justice."[86]

The aim of a Christian social order could however, Temple believed, be summed up in a phrase; '*The aim of a Christian social order is the fullest possible development of individual personality in the widest and deepest possible fellowship.*'[87]

It is possibly this phrase which led Woodhouse to conclude that

> "all that he [Temple] has said is determined by one motive, namely, the right use of resources so that people are enabled to reach the highest possible level of personal development."[88]

Certainly Temple emphasises the development of personality, but for him this is always in the context of fellowship with God and with fellow human beings. Woodhouse may not have meant in this comment to emphasise the individual but in making it he detracts from what was for Temple the central element, his motive, to use Woodhouse's language. It is in salvation that Temple finds his motive and this salvation is not just the personal development postulated by Woodhouse. Temple's view of salvation has been discussed above so it will suffice to draw out here only the one salient point namely that in salvation the self is not so much developed as set free from self, in other words through salvation man, by finding his centre in God rather than in himself, is then free to act as himself in discharging his function in relation to the whole.[89]

In Temple's thought therefore, Craig argues, Christian soteriology and Christian sociology are closely linked. 'Through the former the divine will for individuals is actualised in the life of individuals in society,'[90] though it cannot be emphasised enough to what extent Temple saw this as a collective responsibility. For him just as salvation is not individual, but collective so must

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[86] Temple, *Christianity and Social Order,* 80
[87] Temple, *Christianity and Social Order,* 97
[88] A.F.Woodhouse, 'William Temple 1881 – 1944' Expository Times 93 (1981), 10 – 13, 12
[89] Craig, *Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple, 79*
[90] Craig, *Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple, 82*

society be and so society is not merely the sum of the individuals of which it is made up, but has value as a whole. In this it seems that Temple avoided what Craig believes is a common error of much Christian thought namely ignoring the both positive and negative influence which society can have on an individual. Society was, in Temple's eyes the human community in which salvation must be worked out and so there must be a dynamic interaction between sociology and soteriology in Christian thought.

In *Christianity and Social Order* Temple built on his four principles by outlining six objectives which he believed it was the duty of Christians to call upon the government to pursue. These are more practical than his principles, yet fall short of offering technical solutions, which he believed the Church was not qualified to provide. In brief these objectives state that every child should be part of a family housed with decency and dignity and have access to an education with its focus in worship. Every citizen should have the means to support a family in this manner, have a voice in the management of his labour, sufficient rest and holiday and freedom of speech, worship and assembly.[91] These six objectives make clear to what extent he believed that individuals have a responsibility to each other. In addition he argues that as a background to these six points Christians should insist on the principle set down by the four religious leaders in their Foundations of Peace (1940) namely that: 'The resources of the earth should be used as God's gifts to the whole human race, and used with due consideration for the needs of the present and future generations.' Not just a responsibility to humankind therefore but to the whole of God's creation.[92]

It is clear that when writing in 1923 Temple had been much influenced by the First World War and the prevailing atmosphere of the need for reconstruction in its aftermath. Temple's focus on self sacrifice at this time may well have been grounded in this, as was no doubt some element of his emphasis on fellowship. These were the days of the League of Nations and optimism for international as well as national agreement and Temple's desire therefore for

[91] Temple, *Christianity and Social Order*, 97
[92] Temple, *Christianity and Social Order*, 97

fellowship on moral grounds as well as doctrinal is shown by his huge enthusiasm for ecumenism and national forums for debate such as The Conference on Christian Politics, Economics and Citizenship.[93] His enthusiasm for such meetings did not wane, but it could be said that his emphasis shifted as the emphasis in his writing shifted from self-sacrifice and fellowship in the 1920's to emphasis on love and justice towards the end of his life. It is perhaps therefore useful to look briefly at the work of Temple in this more practical context. As Ramsey has said,

> "Temple's writings were but one factor in his immense influence upon the theological life of the Church. With his rare understanding of various movements in contemporary thought he won a rare measure of trust in himself, and, with his bent for synthesis he did much to interpret different movements to one another."[94]

On an international level Temple's ability to bring groups together and also the value that he placed on unity come to the fore. Temple was a prime mover in the Life and Work committee, which had responsibility for the practical issues in applying Christian ethics to international life and it is more than somewhat interesting that the First Life and Work conference, the Stockholm Conference of Life and Work in 1925, in language highly reminiscent of Temple's called for the Church of England to provide the soul of the Nation and called for the churches to give a 'Christian soul' to the League of Nations.[95] In line with this Temple moved in the 1930's to advocating a scheme to set up a World Council of Churches. The aim of this council was not to bring about total unity, but rather give the Protestant churches of the world a united voice when trying to bring to public attention their views of the political and economic situation of the time. Temple's ecumenical work was, in other words, an attempt to broaden the scope of his work on a national level and was in line with his thinking on Christian unity founded on a belief in the necessity for Christian unity in fighting social inequality. Temple believed that through the work of the council the Christian world would move 'steadily and rapidly towards

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[93] Henceforth COPEC
[94] Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple*, Longmans, 253
[95] Kent, *William Temple*, 97

deeper unity.'[96] This has manifestly not happened and the effects of the consequent religious pluralism on later Christian leaders is an issue for the following chapters. For the present however it is valuable to consider Kent's comment that Temple's belief in such a future for Christendom was conditioned more than he would have recognised by non-religious assumptions surrounding the continued existence of some form of British Empire and in particular the 'dominance of Western socio-political ideas.'[97]

An example of Temple's attempt to bring together different areas of thought on a national plane is the COPEC conference of 1924. Temple wrote to the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Davidson, in 1921 that what he hoped for from the conference was 'the assertion of some principles by a really representative body, [principles] which would be more explicit than the great platitudes and less particular than a political programme'.[98]

The Conference was preceded by several reports, which were then discussed. The outcome of these discussions were a series of principles or as they are often known middle axioms. Temple was, as has already been emphasised very talented at synthesising radically differing viewpoints, but COPEC tested even him. The wide variety of people attending debates meant that any radical proposals were likely to be watered down before being put into print, while lack of support from the Church hierarchy, namely Archbishop Davidson, ensured that the resolutions had little political influence. Perhaps the most negative outcome for Temple, with serious implications for his social theory was however that the Roman Catholics, who had participated in a number of reports, withdrew their support before the assembly itself, showing that the principles or middle axioms, on which Temple placed so much emphasis could not even be agreed on by all Christians.[99]

The General Strike of 1926 and the continuing miners' strike of that year serve as good indicators of Temple's social thought at the time and in particular

[96] William Temple prologue to 'Is Christ Divided?' (1943) in Kent, *William Temple*, 113
[97] Kent, *William Temple*, 113
[98] Kent, *William Temple*, 123
[99] Kent, *William Temple*, 121-2

illustrate what he saw as the role of the church in industrial disputes. Temple was not in the country during the short lived General Strike in May, but on his return joined a group calling itself 'The Conference of Members of the Christian Churches which is seeking to mediate in the coal dispute'. [100] The group consisted of members of the Anglican Church and of several other denominations and they saw their role, as churchmen, as one of mediators. Temple wrote in *The Times* in August,

> "As Christians, and most of us Christians charged with official responsibility, we saw two parties doing great injury to the community, by a continued conflict which was bound to be ended by negotiation sooner or later; our religion and our office required of us that we should do anything which lay in our power to bring them, in the literal sense, to reason... We felt a responsibility for trying to secure that the settlement should be not only economically sound in itself, but reached with the minimum of bitterness or resentment and the maximum of goodwill."[101]

The above is one good example of what some see as a paternalistic attitude in Temple's work. Kent suggests that this sense of responsibility came from 'the late Victorian ecclesiastical tradition that bishops ought to act as umpires in industrial conflicts.'[102] There are clear echos of such nineteenth century thought patterns in Temple's writing, but what is perhaps of greater interest for the present is not the old fashioned motivation, but rather Temple's attempt to put into practise his theory of the role of the Church as spiritual and moral guide.

Temple argues that the Church should do what it is best qualified to do, namely questioning the morality of the whole situation while leaving the technical details to the experts. There was however some ambiguity here in that Temple and his contemporaries seemed to want the Church to have a social policy and yet did not wish to develop the political means by which to implement this. Kent argues that the weakness in the approach of Temple and the others here

[100] Suggate, *William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today,* 85
[101] Suggate, *William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today*, 85-6
[102] Kent, *William Temple,* 141

lay not in their lack of knowledge of the facts, nor in their theology, but rather in 'their trying to influence political conflict when they themselves had so little political power on which to draw.'[103] This lack was well illustrated by the attitude of the Prime Minister Baldwin, who was of the opinion that the Churches had no more right to interfere in the coal dispute than the Federation of British Industry had to look for a reinterpretation of the creed.[104] Certainly Hastings blames the lack of positive action on the part of the churches on Temple and his obsession with the role of the Church as reconciler. For him this failure to do anything, in coming so soon after COPEC, revealed all too clearly the weakness of COPEC.[105]

In short the issue is one of the perceived role of the Church in the nation. This dispute highlights the importance for Temple of the role of the Church in the nation as a mediator as well as a moral guide. Temple hoped that Anglicanism could 'express and incorporate the essential unity of British society'[106] as the national soul. The politicians however felt that it was the role of politics to provide a uniting set of values, while Norman argues that the role of mediator, which Temple so dearly wanted for the Church was rejected by the public, mainly because social radicalism had developed in academic hothouses, such as COPEC, in isolation from true public opinion.[107] The General Strike is therefore an important event in the life of Temple not least in showing that the politicians and general public of the day did not share his vision of the role of the Church in the nation and, as Kent has noted, it showed that not even the majority of 'church people' would have supported Temple's position, as in failing to support the strikers they showed that they 'wanted social peace more than they wanted social change.'[108] As Reckitt has observed with regard to the adoption of the principle of a living wage by Anglican Bishops in the 1920's these prelates, like the majority of the population, knew little or nothing of the

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[103] Kent, *William Temple*, 145
[104] Kent, *William Temple*, 143
[105] Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity 1920 – 1990*, (SCM Press, London, 1991 3rd ed.),
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[106] Kent, *William Temple*, 146
[107] E.R. Norman, *Church and Society in England 1770 – 1970,* Clarendon Press, London, 1976, 340
[108] Kent, *William Temple*, 134

financial factors which had transformed the economic situation on which they based their principles. It was confusing and all that the majority hoped for was that 'trade would soon 'revive' again and permit moral demands to operate with the approval of orthodox economics.'[109]

If what Reckitt has written can be said to be generally true it seems that for the majority of Temple's contemporaries reform and not revolution was what was sought after. They wished to challenge the existing order, but not to overturn it. In this light the above slightly flippant remark however, has significant repercussions for Temple's thought on two counts. Firstly that the Christian socialist tradition within which he claimed to stand did not seem to have penetrated beyond a minority of active churchmen and women who represented an intellectual educated elite in the Church and secondly that contrary to Temple's frequent assertions that the Church should pronounce only on moral matters and leave the technical details and practical solutions to the experts it seemed that a certain amount of technical knowledge was needed on the part of the Church if it was fully to understand the issues, let alone be taken seriously when formulating principles.

It is perhaps this challenge, as well as the changed social and economic situation, which led Temple to say in his opening address to the Malvern conference in 1941 that until the present time political science has ignored Christianity

> "but now we find ourselves fighting for human rights and a conception of life which have no justification except in the Christian doctrine of God and of Man. All the great political questions of our day are primarily theological; and we have not got ready to our hands the body of accepted theological doctrine which we need for the double purpose of vindicating the treasures of our inheritance and of pointing the defenders of these to the source from which they may draw inspiration and steadfastness."[110]

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[109] Maurice B.Reckitt, *Maurice to Temple : A Century in the Social Movement of the Church of England,* (Faber and Faber, London, 1946), 174

[110] Temple, Malvern Conference 1941,12

So, he goes on to say 'we set ourselves to work out the principles of Christian living in the political and economic realms, and the proper relations of these in the "natural order" to the other departments of life and especially to man's destiny as a child of God... for as a wise man has put it "it is the duty of Lambeth to remind Westminster that Westminster is responsible to God; but this does not mean that Westminster is responsible to Lambeth."'[111]

The similarity between COPEC and Malvern clearly lay therefore in the optimism with which they were both embarked upon, particularly with regard to the esteem in which Christian thought was perceived to be held in the political sphere. Here as in his ecumenical work Temple saw a key role for Christianity. The aim of the conference was

> "to consider from the Anglican point of view what are the fundamental facts which are directly relevant to the ordering of the new society that is quite evidently emerging, and how Christian thought can be shaped to play a leading part in the reconstruction after the war is over."[112]

Temple himself later noted that Malvern had been more theological than COPEC[113] but then proceeded to comment that discussions had led to consideration of a reform of the monetary system, a far more detailed practical proposal than Temple would have considered a few years earlier. This comment suggests therefore that far from retreating into principles Temple was towards the end of his life increasingly inclined to involve the Church in discussions of policy and develop a distinct Anglican response to the problems of the day. That Temple's thought moved in a more practical and also realistic direction can be borne out by the last essay he ever wrote entitled '*What Christians stand for in the Secular World.*' Here he argues that if Christians are to have a significant impact on the secular world 'their whole approach to social and political questions needs to be much more realistic than it has commonly been in the past.'[114] Christians, he maintains, need to have a good

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[111] Temple, Malvern Conference 1941,15
[112] Edwards, *Leaders of the Church of England 1828 – 1978,* 340
[113] Temple Malvern Conference 1941, 220- 3
[114] Temple, 'What Christians stand for in the Secular World', 243 – 255, 252

knowledge of the factors that motivate individuals while not forgetting that no matter how important it is to cooperate with other good people, both Christian and non-Christian, the spiritual life must not be neglected and must for the Christian be the foundation for everything. In the spiritual life Temple includes nature and in a return to his argument that a line cannot be drawn between natural and revealed theology argues that it is assumed that the ills of society can be cured with the right aims. 'It is forgotten that man is not a being ruled wholly by his reason and conscious aims. His life is inextricably intertwined with nature.'[115]

In short Temple's basic approach never changes, but over the years he moves not only from emphasising fellowship to focusing on love and justice, but also increasingly to advocating the engagement of Christians with a scientific perspective in their capacities as churchmen as well as as citizens. He wishes to advocate a considered, intellectual approach to life, but not at the expense of human meetings and in contrast to his many assertions of the inherent truth of Christianity and its indisputable place as the 'soul of the nation' he remarks

> "It will need a sustained effort to emancipate ourselves from the one-sidedness of the individualistic attitude and to penetrate to the full meaning of the truth that the fundamental reality of life is the interplay, conflict and continuous adjustment of a multitude of different finite points of view, both of individuals and of groups."[116]

This gives a new twist to Temple's discussions of community and fellowship and begs the question of whether Temple's thought had begun to be influenced by the pluralism that would be an unavoidable issue for his successors. In order to answer that question this issue needs to be assessed as one element within the framework of Temple's social thought.

Conclusion

[115] Temple, 'What Christians stand for in the Secular World', 251
[116] Temple, 'What Christians stand for in the Secular World', 250

In the conclusion of his book 'Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple' Robert Craig refers to Munby's assertion that Temple's prophetic social teaching is the culmination of the Anglican tradition of social concern in the twentieth century and proceeds to question it from the standpoint that contrary to Munby's belief many of the practical problems which Temple was addressing remain crucial social issues to this day.[117] I also wish to question Munby's assertion, but from a theoretical standpoint. It is certainly true that Temple's thought had its roots in a long tradition of social thought in England culminating in the Christian Socialist movement, and this chapter has sketched the outline of this. However the evidence of Temple's many addresses and publications would seem to point to the fact that rather than epitomising a tradition which ends with him, he serves to rejuvenate and reformulate the arguments, acting not as a culmination, but rather the beginning of a line of Anglican Christian social thought which has made its mark on Church and nation in the twentieth century.

As Medhurst and Moyser have argued, Temple, though a member of an established elite in the country was prepared to take a prophetic stance with regard to social issues and as such provides a legacy on which modern church leaders have drawn.[118] So while Temple continues a line of Anglican social thought he also set the pattern of a radical, questioning episcopate. Ramsey, in writing of the period in Anglican history which he defines as from Gore to Temple, notes that while this was a distinct period in the history of the Church certain factors of Anglican continuity were present[119] and, it can be argued, continue to varying degrees to be so. The four elements of Platonism, spirituality, scholarship and care for the *via media,* which Ramsey outlines[120], provide the intellectual foundations for Anglican Christian Social Thought as espoused by Temple. A concluding sketch of Temple's thought under these headings alongside a brief assessment of the innovative elements of Temple's thought will serve to draw out the distinctively Anglican elements of his social theory.

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[117] Craig, *Social Concern in the Thought of William Temple,* 156
[118] Medhurst and Moyser, *Church and Politics in a Secular Age,* 133
[119] Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple,* 164
[120] Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple,* 166

Perhaps the most important of the elements that Ramsey draws out is the Anglican concern with the *via media.* This concern has shown itself in different ways as the middle ground between rival camps, as a tendency to mediation between movements within or outside the Church and as an instinct for defining doctrines of greater or lesser importance. Temple himself demonstrated all of these in his ecumenical work, particularly at conferences, during the miners' strike and in his focus on principles grounded in the incarnation respectively. In particular however he showed all of these tendencies in his approach to Church/ State relations, which forms the crux of this issue. Both Temple's writing and his own life epitomise this tendency to search for the middle ground as regards relation to the status quo. Partly with reference to his formative years growing up at the heart of the establishment, but mainly and more importantly in terms of his later life as an authoritative representative of the established church.

Temple's philosophy and theology, which inspired the intellectual aspect of his social theory, were defined not only by his establishment upbringing and education, but also by his later life as an integral part of that establishment. This special relationship of Church and State can be said to have had an influence in two distinct ways. Firstly Temple, as a representative of the established church, was given the opportunity to speak and act publicly on a number of issues which religious leaders from other churches/ faith communities would never be asked to comment upon. This has a two-fold influence meaning that the voice of the church is heard and seen as relevant on a whole range of issues and secondly that Temple was forced to grapple with these practical issues because of the fact that an opinion was expected. Secondly the links between Church and State meant that although the church has often seen its role as a prophetic one this has been within certain limits and although Temple has been seen in many regards as being fairly radical it would not be unfair to say that he was not revolutionary and the reforms which he proposed were always within the framework of the system as it stood. True Temple was a spokesperson for the 'Life and Liberty' campaign, but even this, contrary to popular misconception, did not argue for the disestablishment of the

Church, but rather for the reform of the decision making structures of the Church. This does not mean that Temple did not want to relax the ties between Church and State, but his primary concern here was to curtail the power of parliament to legislate on the Church's worship practices. Temple in fact would have seen no reason for bishops not to sit in the House of Lords, saw a Christian foundation as vital for all areas of the life of society and felt that the Church had both a right and a duty to pronounce on social issues and it is here that we return to the crux of the question.

The Church could, Temple believed, pronounce on social and political issues, but only within certain boundaries, that is to say, within the limits of its own area of expertise. The Church can formulate moral principles intended to inform individual Christians in all walks of life, but does not have the expertise to decide how these principles should best be put into practice and should not therefore formulate policy or align itself with specific political parties. Such an attitude could only be seen as constructive by one who feels part of the establishment and who feels that there is a common moral basis to society as Temple did. This position must not be confused with the non-political focus on personal morality of those such as Hensley Henson writing in the tradition of conservative Christianity later taken up by E.R. Norman and others. Henson claimed that Christianity could only pronounce with regard to the sphere of personal morality and that economics comprises an autonomous sphere, while those in the tradition of Christian social teaching such as Temple argued that the emphasis in Christianity on the social nature/ fellowship of persons as well as individuality provide Christianity with the tools to critique economics.[121]

As has been shown however, for Temple, personal morality in terms of the actions of individual Christians in their private lives was by no means unimportant. In fact the two aspects of Temple's social theory, the role of the individual and the role of the Church were epitomised in his own life. As a Christian and a private citizen Temple felt that he could join political parties and make suggestions for public policy, as he did in the appendix to

[121] Suggate, *William Temple and Christian Social Ethics Today*, 85

'Christianity and Social Order.'[122] While as Archbishop, embodying to some degree the national Church, he felt that he could make moral pronouncements and question the ethics of principles, but not venture into the realms of public policy. As he himself said in 1943 'the citizen and the churchman should remain distinct though the same individual should be both.'[123] The charisma of episcopal office could in other words be used to question a moral stance, but not the details of policy.

Such issues of the authority of episcopal office are not merely important for Temple's own understanding of his role however, but raise questions regarding the nature of truth and its relation to authority in figures and the institutions that they represent. At the heart of Temple's Anglican Christian Social Theory lies an understanding of Church and State as two elements of God's plan, with specific tasks to perform. This has been discussed above, but for now it is important to mention this with particular regard for the perceived role of the Church as this emphasis on two separate roles could, it seems be a further expression of the *via media* in that by ascribing differing roles to secular and ecclesiastical institutions conflict is avoided or at least shifted. Interest must then be focused on the interaction between the two. Giles Ecclestone has written in this context characterising the relationship of the Church of England to government as one of 'critical solidarity.'[124] Strictly interpreted this provides a fairly accurate summary of Temple's aspirations in this area, although as Preston notes in practice there was often more emphasis on solidarity than on criticism.[125]

To juxtapose reform and revolution in the context of a discussion such as this is often interpreted as imposing a negative evaluation on the reformer. In the case of Temple however this measured response fits well into a pattern of thought based on the *via media.* As Fletcher has said of him

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[122] Temple, *Christianity and Social Order*
[123]Temple, 'What Christians stand for in the Secular World.', 253
[124] Giles Ecclestone in Ronald H. Preston, '*William Temple as social theologian*' Theology 84 (1981), 334 – 341, 339
[125] Preston, '*William Temple as social theologian*', 339

> "Temple was every inch an Anglican, standing in between Romanism and Protestantism in the Via Media or bridge-church position."[126]

Similarly the equilibrium/tension between a conservative and a liberal outlook evident throughout Temple's life witnesses to this middle way.

At this juncture it is helpful to return to the second of Ramsey's four points, namely spirituality. The significance of a life of prayer for theology and the relationship of devotional writing to theology has been an important element in Anglican thought not least with regard to Temple. Much of Temple's work focused on St John while he was often more direct in stressing the need for the Church to maintain its own spiritual life.[127] Niebuhr said of him that his writing on St John represented a 'new medium in the combination of scholarly and devotional treatment.'[128] And the Logos teaching itself with its emphasis on the incarnation uniting the divine and human, was for him all important. At a basic level the issue is one of perception of the relationship of the individual to salvation. As has already been discussed, for Temple the individual is important in their interaction with the whole community and salvation is therefore a communal issue bound up ultimately in the life of the whole community expressed in worship. In his early writing Temple focused this emphasis on community in his writing on sacrifice while later on his concentration was on fellowship. In relation to this it must not be forgotten that Temple lived and worked during both the first and second world wars and therefore the attitudes which he espouses and the emotions he appeals to could be said at times to be relevant not to some timeless Anglican theory, but rather to be specific to England during a certain period of history. Temple's change of emphasis away from a strong notion of self-sacrifice following the First World War, to a greater emphasis on fellowship during the 1930s and 40s and finally a concentration on love provides evidence of this.

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[126] J. Fletcher, *William Temple: Twentieth Century Christian* (Seabury Press, New York, 1963), 287

[127] see for example Temple, 'What Christians stand for in the Secular World', 244

[128] Reinhold Niebuhr in Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple*, 153

A study of other Anglican establishment figures is required before it can be seen whether Temple's social theory is specific to a period in history or is rather more closely bound to place and culture in a broader sense, but for the present it must be noted that Temple's change of emphasis followed not only changing cultural circumstances, but also dialogue with Niebuhr who also placed great emphasis on love and justice. However although Temple's language and emphasis changed 'Niebuhr's influence did not fundamentally alter his cast of mind'.[129] The basic issue remained the same for him, namely that salvation is not about personal salvation but is grounded in a relationship to God expressed in worship and personal spirituality, but also in relationships with others.

For Temple these relationships took many forms. On a personal level he was able to talk to almost anyone and became known as the people's Archbishop, but community and fellowship was a broad concept as far as he was concerned. The importance of worship has already been mentioned, but almost equally important to Temple was education, dialogue and the sharing of ideas. Ramsey's third credential is traditional scholarship and Temple, with the Oxbridge education of a member of the Episcopal elite placed high value on Christian education for all as the basis for a healthy society grounded in Christian morals. As he wrote in *Church and Nation* 'There is no limit to the range of the influence of education, it is the supreme regenerative force.'[130] He himself had taught, with varying degrees of success, but perhaps of greater relevance to the issue under discussion here is his commitment to high level conferences on social issues. When planning COPEC in 1924 and Malvern in 1941 Temple was convinced that bringing together the intellectual elite and other experts to produce a representative critique and to form principles would go a long way to addressing the pressing issues of the day, both in terms of providing solutions and drawing attention to them. Whether or not he succeeded in this is a matter for debate. Medhurst and Moyser argue that COPEC had a significant impact on ecclesiastical liberal professional opinion

[129] Alan Wilkinson, *Christian Socialism: Scott Holland to Tony Blair* (SCM Press, London, 1998), 126

[130] Temple, *Church and Nation.* (Macmillan and Co, London, 1915), 193

'partly because it reflected the contemporary concerns of the liberal minded secular intelligensia.'[131] This is however only a narrow section of the population and there are those who criticised the conferences for being out of touch, intellectual hothouses and others who claim that the diversity of people consulted meant that no resolutions of any weight were ever passed, but what is more important for this thesis is not the outcome of the conferences, but rather the fact that Temple felt that this approach was an essential element of the formation of social theory.

One element of the scholastic tradition that Temple was heavily influenced by was the Platonist strain of thought, Ramsey's fourth factor, and he openly recognised this fact. Ramsey notes that this tendency has kept in check both the Aristotelian spirit and the influence of Hegelianism[132], which could otherwise have dominated Anglican thought and which had a greater influence on European protestant theology particularly evident in those countries where revolution, both political and spiritual comprises an integral part of their history. This may seem on the surface to be of only peripheral interest as regards Temple's social thought, but I would argue, it is in actual fact crucial to the understanding of the distinctly Anglican nature of his thought. In Temple's essay published in 1943 he remarks that

> "The revolutionary and mechanistic thought finds its classical and fontal expression in Descartes disastrous deliverance, Cogito, ergo sum. Thus the individual self-conscious became central. Each man looks out on a world which he sees essentially as related to himself."[133]

The Platonist strain of thought represents in other words a reaction against any philosophy which promotes "I – it" relationships over "I –Thou" relationships, scientific understanding over relationships. It highlights the importance of valuing individuals for themselves and so rejects systems which reduce humans to anonymous parts of a whole. When evaluated in this light we can therefore see that what Ramsey talks of as the Platonist strain of thought can, in the

[131] Medhurst, and Moyser, *Church and Politics in a Secular Age,* 34
[132] Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple*, 164.
[133] Temple, 'What Christians stand for in the Secular World', 247

context of social thought, be seen in a broader perspective as a concentration on the importance of community and the development of personality in terms of vocation and fellowship, themes which Temple constantly returns to as has been shown above.

Temple's social thought, his theology and practice were in short one and there is no more characteristic aspect of his thought than this fact. Niebuhr's insightful comment along these lines is worth quoting in its entirety as it sums up the position that Temple found himself in and the direction in which he took Anglican theological thinking.

> "The great strength of his [Temple's] theology lay in his ability to harmonise diverse and sometimes conflicting strains of thought into a living and creative unity. Thus the traditional medial position of his church between catholic and protestant thought achieved a new dimension in his thought, which made him not only the most important theologian of his own church but also the most influential thinker of the rising movement of ecumenical Protestantism... His position as the leader of advanced social thought in Britain and in the western world was prompted by both religious impulse and a shrewd understanding of the mechanics as well as of the standards of social justice."[134]

Niebuhr credits Temple here with being the most influential thinker of the ecumenical movement and it is in this area that Temple began to forge new paths away from the traditional fields of Anglican thought that had preceded him. It is also therefore an appropriate point at which to conclude analysis of Temple's thought. While those who followed Temple may well be said to have taken up his line of social thought his influence on the ecumenical movement and the fact that it grew so much after his death means that his successors faced very different questions in the fields of ecumenical and international relations than he had done. The irony is that the ecumenical movement that Temple championed in the name of unity may have contributed to a situation in which the unity of the national Church and State, integral to Temple's worldview is no longer obvious. The question for the following chapters is whether the

[134] Reinhold Niebuhr, 'Archbishop Temple' *Christianity and Crisis 4* (November 1944) cited in Charles Brown, *Niebuhr and his Age,* (Trinity Press International, Philadelphia, 1992), 120

fundamental precepts of Temple's social thought are shared by his successors to such an extent that a distinctive Anglican Christian Social Theory can be said to exist.

CHAPTER 3: THE SOCIAL THOUGHT OF DAVID JENKINS

Background

Family

David Jenkins' family background, unlike that of William Temple was not intertwined with the establishment, nor for that matter was it connected with the Church of England at any level. Jenkins was born in 1925 to parents who were committed members of the local Methodist church and into a family firmly rooted in the Wesleyan tradition. Both his grandfathers had been lay preachers and the influence of his maternal grandfather in particular in Jenkins own words 'left an imprint' on him.[135] Nevertheless it was two separate encounters with the Church of England in boyhood which were to confirm in Jenkins the sense of a personal relationship with God and an associated call to pass on this experience to others. At the age of eleven Jenkins was attending a boys' Bible class run by a local evangelical Church of England Church, an experience Jenkins recalls as one of discovery, of being encouraged to 'rummage in the Bible and study it verse by verse' in direct contrast to his memories of a Sunday School where he had not been allowed to question.[136] During the same period Jenkins, while taken ill on a summer camp, was befriended by a local curate and through this clergyman developed an interest in the Anglican liturgy from a 'high church' perspective. "Somehow", he recalls in Free to Believe, a semi autobiographical work co-written with his daughter Rebecca,

> "the shape and music of the Anglican services fitted in well with my perceptions of life, adding a sense of mystery and a deepening sense of worship which built in me an intense feeling

[135], David Jenkins and Rebecca Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* (BBC Books, 1991), 5
[136] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 6

> of the universal importance of the love of God, a love which I felt increasingly caught up by."[137]

By the age of twelve Jenkins had decided to become a missionary.[138] While it seems therefore that Jenkins path to the priesthood and leadership in the Church was a result of a questioning of the faith tradition with which he was brought up in contrast to Temple's wholesale adoption of the accepted order the issue is not as clear cut as this. Jenkins came after all from a tradition where the Preacher is a respected member of society and from a family where to take on such a role of leadership of a congregation was an accepted and natural career path. The chance to ask questions and the diversity of the Anglican tradition as well as the sense of mystery engendered in its worship were it seems what drew Jenkins to the Anglican Church rather than any conflict with the values and traditions of his family. As a child Jenkins used to line up chairs and preach to them,[139] while as a young priest returning to his childhood Methodist church to preach he sounded to one elderly member of the congregation exactly like his maternal grandfather.[140]

Nevertheless Jenkins felt a distinct calling to minister in the Church of England and writing in 1987 of the sense of duty connected to his calling to become first a priest and then Bishop of Durham in the Church of England he comments

> "I have received my encounters with God, my calling to respond to God and the shaping of my understanding of what it is to worship God and to have hope in God largely and basically through and in the Church of England."[141]

Education

Education alongside family upbringing had a large part to play in the development of Jenkins' character and sense of priorities and calling. He notes how as a teenager his ambition to be not just a missionary, but a missionary

[137] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 6
[138] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 7
[139] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 10
[140] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 5
[141] David Jenkins, *God, Miracle and the Church of England,* (SCM Press, London, 1988), 75

bishop was undoubtedly linked to the fact that he had just started at St Dunstan's school, an independent school named after a bishop of some standing.[142] Jenkins' education therefore at a public school with Church of England connections served, it seems, to confirm and strengthen his calling to serve God within the framework of the established Church. Jenkins was an academic child who enjoyed his schooling[143] and this positive experience of the nature of the establishment almost certainly contributed to his conviction later in life that though flawed the Church of England has a distinct and important role to play in serving the nation and that the

> "Church of England, as a committed and independent member of the Anglican Communion has as much to be thankful for for being itself and as many accidental but providential opportunities for serving the kingdom as it has ever had..."[144]

One of two periods which Alastair Ross identifies as especially formative in Jenkins' earlier life[145] was a spell spent with the army in India towards the end of World War II. Jenkins moved straight from one bastion of the British establishment to another on being called up straight from school and moreover moved straight into a position of leadership, which even at this young age it seems he felt it natural to adopt. Jenkins cites as one of the main lessons that he learnt in the army the necessity of 'balance between interdependence and leadership.'[146] The influence of this insight is evident in his later work and will be returned to, but serves here the purpose of indicating the sense of the importance of the task of leadership which had already been instilled in Jenkins as it had in Temple years before.

Philosophical Influences

Jenkins says that he left India with a strong feeling that

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[142] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe*, 7
[143] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 5
[144] Jenkins, *God, Miracle and the Church of England*, 109
[145] Alastair Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* (M Phil. Thesis, Manchester University, 1995), 17
[146] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe*, 8

> "cut and dried answers can only deal with a restricted part of the world. Our preconceptions must always be challenged by wider experiences."[147]

This sense of the need for breadth of learning as well as the use of reason to question established assumptions led Jenkins to read Greats as a first degree at Oxford followed only later by a degree in theology.[148] Ross believes that Jenkins' natural predisposition towards the use of logic was reinforced by reading Greats[149] a trait which was consequently of huge influence on his thought. Jenkins, like Temple therefore formed the foundations of his philosophy and therefore also theology on the basic precepts of the importance of the use of human reason and logic in serving God and also of the interrelation of context to message and the necessity of researching and attempting to understand the cultural and historical contexts behind any 'truths' one is presented with.

Jenkins' emphasis on the critical use of reason can be seen to have its roots in his questioning personality, but was, it seems not inconsiderably influenced by the writings of Bishop Gore. Jenkins read Gore's three books on the 'Reconstruction of Belief' while still at school[150] and through these began to see the opportunities for reconciling "critical use of the Bible with orthodox faith".[151] This theoretical foundation matches Jenkins' description of himself as 'critically orthodox'[152] and more specifically in an interview in 1991 as 'an old fashioned liberal, almost a Barthian, almost a conservative.'[153] To those whose knowledge of Jenkins' thought is limited to the more sensational reports of 'The Durham Affair' such an assessment may seem surprising, but Alastair Ross, whose detailed study of the works of David Jenkins led him to conclude that Jenkins represents "what would be regarded by most Christians as the

[147] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe*, 9
[148] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe*, 7
[149] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 181
[150] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe*, 9
[151] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe*, 7
[152] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe*, 33
[153] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 14

mainstream,"[154] argues that rather than lying with Jenkins the roots of the controversy lie instead within English society itself and the ambiguous position of the Church in general and its episcopacy in particular within the nation.[155] The role in and implications of 'The Durham Affair' for both Jenkins' work and the position of the Church in social thought will be developed later on. For now however it is sufficient to note that the radical and controversial nature of Jenkins' thought is far from unambiguous.

This said however, no matter how much Jenkins maintains a line of critical orthodoxy as far as his thought is concerned, he also places himself firmly within a line of socially aware and reforming Bishops. His admiration of Gore, a founding member of the Christian Social Union[156] has already been noted and of William Temple he says that he is 'perhaps the nearest thing I have to a hero.'[157] By Ian Ramsey too, one of his predecessors in Durham, Jenkins was clearly profoundly influenced. Ramsey's "commitment to living at the interface between faith and practice, and [his] philosophy, faith and theology"[158] all inspired Jenkins. Of interest to this study is not simply the content of the thought of these men who helped to shape Jenkins' own thought, but the very fact that he saw himself as following in their footsteps and wished to identify his ministry with the tradition which they represent. Orthodox Jenkins may well be, but he also describes himself as critical and these bishops were all as committed to the questioning of the social order as to academic theology albeit in a particular way within the bounds of the Anglican institutions.

Moorman in his article 'The Anglican Bishop' writing before the appointment of Jenkins to the See of Durham notes that

> "A generation ago Charles Gore, Kenneth Kirk, Arthur Headlam and William Temple were all scholar bishops of considerable reputation...But there are no such today. This is due to two

[154] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 15
[155] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 15 - 16
[156] Henceforth CSU
[157] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 12
[158] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* p.16

> things the greater pressure of work and the fact that scholars are not usually appointed as bishops."[159]

It is not possible here to research this statement in any detail, however it is sufficient for the purposes of this study to remark that Jenkins, on the contrary, seems to have followed in the footsteps of these his heroes having been appointed as a scholar bishop. It remains to be seen how far he emulates them in other ways and in particular develops the strain of social thought formulated by Temple, influenced by the Anglican academic tradition briefly mentioned above of the importance of critical reason and contextual analysis applied to philosophical, theological and practical thought.

Before proceeding to an examination of Jenkins' own thought and praxis it is important to highlight one further area of ideology that has had an influence on his thought in a variety of ways, namely Marxism and the associated Christian thought world of Liberation theology. The implications of these two areas of thought on Jenkins' own life are far reaching and will be considered in further detail later on both in terms of the social influences on Jenkins and of his own method and the direction of his social thought. For the present however it is important to stress the major impact that Marxism has had on Christian thinkers today. As Jenkins himself has written "we can no more be pre-Marxist today than pre-Freudian" [160] implying that the thought world of Marx has irrevocably changed the way in which we see the world. Here we will dwell however not on the impact of Marxism on Christian thought in general, but rather on Jenkins in particular. Jenkins' own natural tendency to set issues in context and in the scheme of history no doubt alongside his experiences in the developing world (see below) enabled him to see the positive aspects of Marxist critique. Marx draws attention, Jenkins claims in particular to three areas of society that Christians and other thinkers have tended to ignore namely "Exploitation: Conflict: Control in the production and understanding of

[159] J.R.H. Moorman, 'The Anglican Bishop.' In Peter Moore (ed.) *Bishops but what kind?*, (SPCK, London, 1982), 122
[160] David Jenkins, *The Contradiction of Christianity,* (SCM Press, London, 1976), 109

ideas."[161] The Marxist diagnoses, Jenkins maintains, seem "to be the most powerful pointer to our sharpest present human contradictions and sources of inhumanity." They are, he argues the "most appropriate, challenging and creative that are available to us." And "on the subject of obstacles to being human they have to be taken absolutely seriously. However", he continues " I refuse to believe that they are to be taken absolutely..."[162] They do not in other words provide a total definition of reality although Jenkins, unlike many critics of Marxist ideology and the association of liberation theology with the former, who argue that they are not Christian enough, maintains that

> "the whole point of arguing against certain features of Marxism or certain aspects, say, of the so called 'theology of liberation' is that they are not human enough."[163]

Exactly why Jenkins takes this stance and the implications of his consequent focus on 'being human' for his social thought will be examined at a subsequent juncture. For now it is sufficient to note that Marxist theory and praxis had a significant impact on the development of Jenkins' thought and his criticisms of the Church and society.

Social Influences

It has already been noted above that Jenkins' time with the army in India had a profound affect on him. His first experience of a culture very different from his own as well as conversations with people of many other faiths led him to reflect on the source of faith and he came to the conclusion that it must be independent from culture as belief continues in so many varied forms, while at the same time feeling his own belief seriously challenged by the condition of many people he saw. The impact of these experiences and their influence on his thought was then further deepened by what Ross refers to as the second formative period in Jenkins' life.[164] A period of four years spent as director of

[161] Jenkins, *The Contradiction of Christianity,* 34
[162] Jenkins, *The Contradiction of Christianity,* 32
[163] Jenkins, *The Contradiction of Christianity,* 104
[164] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 19

Humanum studies for the World Council of Churches[165] in Geneva. Jenkins' brief was to carry out a study into the nature of humanity, but as a result of his experiences during the period of research he produced a document highly critical not only of Christians in the developed world in general, but also of the WCC in particular.[166]

The job took Jenkins round the world looking at issues of race, health care and the relationship of faith to social issues[167] and many real challenges to his own position presented.

> "Dialogue with Marxists, close contact with Christians and others from various parts of the world confirmed his sense that God could not be captured by one culture, language or tradition."[168]

and Jenkins maintains it was during this period and as a result of these encounters that he came to the realisation that

> "if, after all, Jesus is the Son of the whole world – the whole universe – then any of the questions which trouble the human race must be substance and subject for Christians to wrestle with."[169]

In addition to this profound impact on the relation of Jenkins' theology to social thought and his subsequent pronouncements on the role of the Church in social issues the time Jenkins spent in Geneva widened his horizons so that he felt in his own words a 'displaced person.'[170] He could, he maintains in an interview given in 1991 "never go back into the insularity of the UK and within that the insularity of the Church of England."[171] Yet this is a comment made by a man who as a diocesan bishop could be said to embody the establishment of

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[165] Henceforth WCC
[166] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 18
[167] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 11
[168] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 19
[169] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 11
[170] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 11
[171] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 19

both Church and nation. Jenkins had however, until his appointment as bishop, no personal experience of working within the structures of the Church of England and therefore of being bound by its institutional nature[172] so his general ambiguity towards the Church as an institution compounded by his time in Geneva is far from surprising. The full implications of the conflict in Jenkins between individual and position can be seen in the eruption of 'The Durham Affair' on his appointment as bishop and will be discussed in this context when examining his social thought and the role of this in his ministry. At this juncture however it is sufficient to note the tension inherent in his ministry from this time on between a commitment to the traditions and position of the Church of England and frustration at its insularity. Jenkins became and remained partly as a result of his time in Geneva a "loyal if critical member of the Church of England, but an enthusiastic Anglican" seeing the Anglican communion as a chance to open up and liberate the Church of England.[173]

Method

It has already been noted that Jenkins sees himself as critically orthodox, but it remains to be seen to what extent this is an accurate description of the method he uses when approaching theology and philosophy. Jenkins is first and foremost an academic theologian, yet perhaps the most important aspect of Jenkins' method is precisely the interrelation between these two, on the one hand the emphasis on logic and reason of the academic and on the other the focus on faith as an experiential reality known in the relationships between individuals in community as well as between individual and God. The place of this dichotomy in Jenkins' thought is perhaps best explained by Jenkins himself as he discusses the existence of God. He argues for an espousal of Butler's "division between reason and revelation in our approach both to the world and to God" though tempered by the challenges of Bonhoeffer as regards the dangers of establishing religious authority as worldly authority.[174] Reason, he believes, can never establish the existence of God, as God's divinity is

[172] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 181
[173] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 158
[174] David Jenkins, *Guide to the Debate about God,* (Lutterworth Press, Cambridge, 2nd ed. 1985), 108

beyond reason, however revelation must, in the light of Bonhoeffer, be understood as taking the servant's part.

> "Knowledge of God must have a form which is always open, humble and obedient to the world as well as to God who is involved in his world."[175]

Theology in other words requires experience of God through revelation, tempered by the application of reason. Such an approach however could take several different forms and Jenkins' method therefore requires further explanation.

In the article 'Putting Theology to Work' published in 1978 [176] Jenkins explored the boundaries and uses of theology. There he stated that his concern when doing theology is the "practical relation between faith and truth"[177] and in these two words we find the focus of Jenkins entire method, assuming of course that what Jenkins means by these two words is understood. Faith for Jenkins is crucial to any form of theological thought, though it is not a static state, faith is a 'developing relationship to God'[178] both on a personal and communal plane. The concept of relationship for Jenkins is crucial here and is a lynchpin in his method as this relationship (or relationships) requires 'articulation, criticism and development'[179] for

> "If we do not build up some coherent theological theories and stories and put them to work in our living and thinking then we shall be trapped in a series of unconnected existential exclamations and attitudes"[180]

Faith must in other words be tested and furthered if it is to be of value to the world today and bring people closer to truth and theology is the "articulation and critical development of insights of faith."[181] For if it is through faith that I

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[175] Jenkins, *Guide to the Debate about God,* 108
[176] David Jenkins, *' Putting Theology to Work',* Theology 80 (1978), 81-83, 78
[177] Jenkins, *'Putting Theology to Work'*, 115
[178] Jenkins, *'Putting Theology to Work'*, 114
[179] Jenkins, *'Putting Theology to Work'*, 115
[180] Jenkins, *'Putting Theology to Work'*, 115
[181] Jenkins, *'Putting Theology to Work'*, 115

understand myself and others better, Jenkins argues, then any valid content of faith must be relatable to the world in which we live and which shapes our day to day lives. This position Jenkins claims is grounded in the Christian tradition of 'experience, faith and theology'[182]. So in practical terms Jenkins feels that the interaction of insights of faith and contemporary worldly issues is not only important, but rather essential to any constructive theological method. In his words

> "Theology must [therefore] be put to work to discover and uncover the differences which a glimpse of the reality of God makes to our handling of and suffering in the realities of this world."[183]

Jenkins is determined that theology should relate to real life for it is here that truth can be found and this has two separate though connected implications for his method. Firstly his emphasis on the vital focus of Christian thought on contemporary issues and using current modes of thought, including drawing on the knowledge and processes of other disciplines and secondly his denunciation of the insularity of much Christian thought, both as regards frames of reference and issues addressed.

Jenkins' justification for and underpinning of both strands of this approach is biblical precedent showing the fundamental dependence of his method on an Anglican reliance on the teachings of scripture as mediated by scholarship and tradition, an orthodox return to first principles, complemented by the critical evaluation of their origins through the use of scholarship both ancient and contemporary. Jenkins makes much use of traditional biblical scholarship, but at this juncture his concern is with the use of the Bible as a whole and how this can inspire Christian thinking and action as a general method. The events and developments with which the biblical writings are concerned produced reactions, he argues,

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[182] Jenkins, *'Putting Theology to Work'*, 116
[183] Jenkins, *'Putting Theology to Work'*, 116

> "out of which arises a new sense of God and so new ways of living and hoping in the ways of living in the events and developments which are so troubling... These events and developments were not reflected or reported as specifically and separately religious. They were events and developments in the ordinary life and history of the people concerned."[184]

So a valid theological method should in his opinion produce an open theology

> "a theology which takes care that it makes use of all that has been passed on in the Bible, and in addition is open to all the questions put to it by the world." [185]

The problem for the contemporary church as Jenkins sees it therefore is that theological statements and Christian behavioural patterns "do not seem to grow directly out of, or be addressed very directly to the shape and pressures of personal life as they are experienced by our fellow citizens and, indeed, by ourselves."[186]

The biblical tradition of faith, experience and theology tells us, Jenkins maintains, that God is in some way related realistically to the present and the future and if this is so any insights of faith must have the potential to be related to the world in which we live.[187] Jenkins' may have had doubts about the place of the Church in providing social comment, but it seems that he did not doubt the validity of the use of theology as a methodological starting point, a conclusion supported by Ross who writes that "He [Jenkins] applied theology to social ethics, rather than the other way round."[188] Theology must in Jenkins' terminology be 'put to work' to discover what difference the awareness of the existence of God makes to the approach of Christians to suffering in the world. For if there is no difference, Jenkins claims, then faith cannot claim to provide the relationship between God and current reality and therefore also to provide insights into truth.[189]

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[184] David Jenkins, *'The Significance of Failure'* Theology 80 (1978), 114-119, 82
[185] David Jenkins' talk to annual conference of modern church peoples union, Oxford, 1965 in Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 16
[186] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 82
[187] Jenkins, *'Putting Theology to Work'*, 116
[188] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 156
[189] Jenkins, *'Putting Theology to Work'*, 116

This method of putting theology to work based on the belief that there must be interaction between Church and World and between faith and practical action involves four elements which Jenkins' claims summarise the whole approach. These elements provide therefore a useful summary, for our purposes, of Jenkins' method both on a general level and in terms of what he believes is the best approach to individual issues. The four elements are firstly, analysis of the realities (a theological process because God is in the world), secondly use of traditions (drawing on stories and language about faith in response to God), thirdly, selection of entry-points (areas where particular human problems can provide a forum for faith and life to interact) and fourthly, worship (the celebration of everything that faith promises and that humanity can be).[190] Jenkins himself suggests how this can be put to work in concrete situations, how such a method can work for the Church as a whole. We will return to this at a later stage as we expand on the content of Jenkins' social thought, but for the present the focus remains Jenkins' own method and the foundation that this provides for his social thought. As the earlier commentary on Jenkins' thoughts on the interaction of reason and revelation also shows, these four elements highlight the importance he places in his thought on the interaction between Church and World, but also an assumption that there are constraints on this. This is necessary at one level because it is the role of faith to seek salvation not solutions[191] and because while faith can give insights onto all areas of life, it cannot provide expertise and detailed knowledge of every area of social, political and economic life. At another level however the failure of the Church to interact with issues of everyday life is precisely that, a failure and here we return to the second major theme of Jenkins' method, his criticism of the insularity of the Church.

Writing in 1978 in advance of the Lambeth Conference of that year Jenkins addressed this issue directly. His comments on the role of the episcopate during this period almost a decade before his own appointment in Durham are revealing and will be analysed in greater detail later. Here our concern is with

[190] Jenkins, *'Putting Theology to Work'*, 119
[191] Jenkins, *'Putting Theology to Work'*, 118

his more general comments regarding the role of the Church and tradition in relation to the pressures of the contemporary (or post modern) world. Jenkins criticises the preoccupation of much of the Church with internal affairs and remarks that

> "Church formulations of doctrine provide us with slogans by which in the name of Tradition we distort the contemporary reality through which God would speak to us and renew the Tradition."[192]

Jenkins in other words sees the relationship between Church and World and between Tradition and contemporary reality as a dynamic one, constantly developing and with valid contributions to be made by all sides. Faith may well have a role to play in discussions of the political and social questions of the day, but must, Jenkins argues, understand itself and the world before its comments can be relevant.

"Assertions about Christian doctrine and Christian Duty should, out of respect for God and for our fellow human beings, be restrained. They should be made only after a rigorous attempt to check up on the understanding of the world to which these assertions are addressed and after a sensitive attempt to understand the selves who want these assertions to be made."[193]

We need to find, Jenkins argues, an

> "appropriate contemporary shape for faith and church. This would be a faith and church which is so confident of God's presence in our contemporary contexts that we are set free to display the utmost humility about our capacity to recognise and respond to him."[194]

This last assertion summarises well Jenkins' method as regards the formulation of social thought by the churches: confidence as regards the existence of God and the ability of the Church, with reference to, but not over dependence on,

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[192] David Jenkins, '*Canterbury Tales or Canterbury Pilgrims?*' Theology 81: 1978, 241-243, 242

[193] Jenkins, '*Canterbury Tales or Canterbury Pilgrims?*', 242 -3

[194] Jenkins, '*Canterbury Tales or Canterbury Pilgrims?*', 243

tradition, to speak of this to the nation, combined with a humility and openness to change as regards knowledge of other areas of public life and the role of the church as an authority in the nation. As Ross has noted Jenkins aimed to relate theology to daily life, but his "starting point was God" [195] This by no means however means that Jenkins believed that the Church had reached this stage, rather he saw the challenge of theology for him and all Christians to be to work towards such a church.

Jenkins' emphases on the duty of the Church to the nation and on the use of reason as a complement to theology can be traced back to his background in the establishment in terms of schooling and church and his university background respectively. His equally significant emphasis on the humility of the Church is more difficult to place, but has, it seems, its roots in the periods of Jenkins' life which Ross describes as formative and which he spent outside England and therefore distanced from the established Church, both physically and mentally. As has already been noted Jenkins' time in India brought him to the conclusion that faith given its many guises must be independent of culture, by which he meant that while religious beliefs may be shaped by culture, the truth which inspires them is universal. He had had the opportunity to dialogue with a number of people of different faiths and was consequently open to the fact that Christian statements are made in a plural society and must consequently be made with humility and respect for other traditions, while interfaith dialogue should not only be tolerated, but actively encouraged[196]. This is important as regards Jenkins method, not simply because it illustrates his acceptance of a plural society, but because it explains his emphasis that leadership by and authority of the Church must be sensitive to the surrounding society.

> "The purpose of leadership is derived from something other than the fact of being a leader or of being led....And how can we know what leadership, oversight and service in the Church are for if we are not continuously being sensitised to God, the world and ourselves"[197]

[195] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 156
[196] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 157
[197] Jenkins, '*Canterbury Tales or Canterbury Pilgrims?*', 241

The Church and all Christians within an established church must in other words constantly question their role and position in society in order not to become complacent as regards relationships with God and the world. The ecumenical movement for example was for him important at a world wide level[198] but had little value

> "except in so far as it is a function of the responses of the churches to God and the world and a provocation to the churches to be more effective and realistic in response to God and the world"[199]

Hence Jenkins assertion that it is nonsense to talk of a 'post- Christian age' as there has never been one. To identify any age as such would be he argues to treat Christianity simply as a cultural construct.[200] So talk of a 'post- Christian age' is, in his eyes, symptomatic of a lack of faith in God.[201]

For an establishment figure in an established Church this is an interesting line of argument, but it can easily be understood when Jenkins' preference for being identified as an Anglican rather than as Church of England is considered. A decade after urging bishops at the 1978 Lambeth Conference to be broad minded and open to change he himself attended a Lambeth Conference as a bishop. A comment made to his diocesan synod following this event serves well to illustrate both Jenkins' affection for his Anglican heritage and his assumptions as regards the vehicle which this communion provides for social and theological thought. 'Fancy', he said,

"God making use of the rather insular and "Established" English – "Anglicani" – to spill over into this sort of multi cultural, world –wide and diverse yet mutually committed community and communion!"[202]

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[198] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 159
[199] David Jenkins, Editorial, *Theology 79* (1976), 27
[200] David Jenkins, *Still Living with Questions,* (SCM Press, London, 1990), 75
[201] Jenkins, *Still Living with Questions,* SCM, 75
[202] Personal notes Durham diocesan synod 5 Nov 1988- in Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 158

So it seems that Jenkins "belief that Anglicanism provided an open and tolerant vehicle for the search for truth"[203] was to a considerable extent the reason why he felt able to work within its bounds and the institutions of the Church of England. He saw the Church not "primarily as a transmitter for received tradition, but as a fellowship of people on a pilgrimage"[204], a pilgrimage grounded in a sense of uncertainty, a sense of being lost and therefore not having all the answers which he saw as the way to coming closer to God.[205] In this way it is possible to understand his acceptance of the role as diocesan bishop and his use of the role, including taking part in debates in the House of Lords, the epitomy of the established Church/ State relationship in this country, as a continuation of his thought that openness, humility, discussion and a willingness to change should characterise not only the Church itself, but also its relations with the world.

This approach, which Jenkins referred to as a 'critical, questioning exposition of the faith'[206] is in his opinion not only a legitimate way of being Anglican, but an essential part of that theological tradition.[207] Questioning lies as much at the heart of his method and approach to both theological thought and its application to contemporary situations as does his reliance on the scholarship of the Anglican tradition. Ross notes that honest questions became for Jenkins 'more important than clear cut answers'[208] and here we approach what is at the heart of Jenkins' method as we return to the issue of the relationship between faith and truth. Jenkins can label himself as 'critically orthodox' and in turn interpret this label as a positive theological method precisely because his dynamic, relationship-based understanding of God and faith in God leads him to the conclusion that the God of history intended men and women, made in the image of God, to use reason and therefore that 'theology should be at the heart of all academic integrity and criticism and exploration.'[209]

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[203] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 158
[204] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 157
[205] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 68
[206] David Jenkins statement April 1986 Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 67
[207] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 67
[208] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 20
[209] Jenkins, *God, Miracle and the Church of England,* 16

With the result that

> "One of the main contributions therefore real faith in God and serious theology ought to make to our present confusions and conflicts is to support us in refusing to accept any orthodoxies, any theologies, any dogmatic acceptance of theories political, economic or psychological which shut up men and women in anything less than God."[210]

Jenkins is 'passionately concerned to maintain that belief in God in Christ is valid and that it must be understood and expressed in the light of real human experience and scientific knowledge.'[211]

So theology starts, for Jenkins, in faith and is a way of communicating and learning about that faith through God's gift of logic. He claims that the pattern for his life has been a combination of pastoral work on the one hand and academic on the other, both elements of the same theological task.[212]

Theology

If Jenkins' method, as has been postulated above, fundamentally seeks to free humans to relate to God and each other it is important to understand the theological convictions underlying this method and the developed theology which proceeds from it and forms the foundation for Jenkins' social thought. Alastair Ross has argued that Jenkins' Christological position permeates the majority of his thought[213] and certainly it seems that an exposition of his Christology paves the way to a broader understanding of his theology and indeed social and political thought.

In the Bampton lectures of 1966 Jenkins demonstrated both his commitment to the Anglican tradition of Biblical and patristic scholarship and his method of applying both faith and reason when thinking theologically. Focusing on the debates by early Christians flowing from the Johannine tradition of Jesus

[210] Jenkins, *God, Miracle and the Church of England,* 16
[211] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 21
[212] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 10
[213] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 42

Christ as Logos, which came to a conclusion at the Council of Chalcedon Jenkins is eager to stress the unity of God and Humankind as personified in the life of Jesus. Jesus Christ, he argues,

> "came to be seen as the union of the transcendent reality of God and the historico-material reality of man without the reduction of the one to the other."[214]

For Jenkins himself the adoption of this position comes from the implementation of his method stressing the synthesis of faith and reason, as he argued in the Bampton Lectures for the "historical reality of the personality of Jesus"[215] as reflected in the events of his life and death recorded in the New Testament writings. Such writings are most likely to be the grounds for the creation of a community of faith, he argues, rather than the imaginative creations of such a community and so must be accepted with faith, while recognising the fact that the actual accounts will have been moulded by their context and must therefore be critically evaluated as such.[216] All of this is the specific theological outworking of his methodological emphasis on the equal validity of knowledge of persons as compared to knowledge of empirical material as foundations for thought.[217] This shows not only Jenkins' adoption of the tradition of religious knowledge, also glimpsed in his frequent emphasis on the necessity and validity of mysticism in theological thought, but also draws attention to the profound emphasis on relationships, both divine and human (see pannikar – horizontal and vertical) as the pivotal factor in Jenkins' theology and social thought. We will return later to a discussion of the implications which Jenkins' believes that these relationships to God and to neighbour have for both individual Christians and the Church in relating to the world, but first it is important to understand how this underpins Jenkins' Christology. Jenkins in an attempt to formulate the fundamentals of belief some years ago set down what he calls two 'signposts to belief' which state what he sees as essential in Christian faith. He says

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[214]David Jenkins, *The Glory of Man,* (SCM Press, London, 1969), 49
[215]Jenkins, *The Glory of Man,* 38
[216] Jenkins, *The Glory of Man,* 23
[217]Jenkins, *The Glory of Man,* 7

> "God is, He is as He is in Jesus so there is hope. God is, He is for us, so it is worth it."[218]

God is in other words actively involved in the world and in a relationship with humanity and so theology and social thought must recognise and respond to this. To put it in more academic language theology is concerned, Jenkins argues, with "the practice of transcendence in the midst" [219]

> "It is of course Transcendence who is loving and it is upon transcendence that we wholly and totally depend. But 'the Word became flesh' and the Passion which is love became the passion of flesh and blood suffering to death... The transfigured Christ became the disfigured Christ before he became the Risen Christ."[220]

What Jenkins wishes to emphasise here is the active participation of God in the realities of daily life and of human suffering. The implications of this theological position are twofold. Firstly an emphasis on God's presence in the contemporary world points the way to an understanding of human responsibility and secondly this perception of 'transcendence in the midst' points to the risks that God takes in being involved with humanity and the subsequent implications for the inherent value of humanity.

The first point will receive further attention in a discussion of the Jenkins social thought. Here it will suffice to note the direct link for Jenkins between the Love of God, its revelation in the person of Jesus and its practical application in the actions of Christian women and men.

> "If we believe that He [Jesus Christ] is the Cosmic Christ or that the very being and love of God is expressed in Him then a passion for people as they are in the hope of what they can be saved to become is both demanded of us and offered to us. This passion has a heavenly (transcendent) origin and a heavenly fulfilment but we can enter into it in a manner consistent with

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[218] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe*, 77
[219] David Jenkins ecumenical review July 1976, 276
[220] David Jenkins, 'Doctrines Which Drive One to Politics' in Haddon Wilmer (ed.) *Christian Faith and Political Hopes,* (Epworth Press, London, 1979), 139 –155, 148

> God's revelation of himself through Jesus Christ only through the actualities of flesh and blood."[221]

As regards risk, Jenkins believes that this is a central element in faith, not least because God himself took on a risk in creation and

> "Jesus as Lord makes it clear that God is the God who risks himself because he is in very truth, and through all eternity the God who is Love... God took the risk of being limited by his own creation – by making men and women in His image and giving them freedom. Jesus, in being the man God chose to become, might mean that God has risked his creation and needs to be involved in it in order to bring about his purposes of love and worth"[222]

> "But God is not diverted by the effects of the risks He has taken for He is Love and Divine Love cannot be diverted, defeated nor deflected from the pursuit of creation, salvation and fulfilment."[223]

As earlier discussion of Jenkins' theological method has already shown his theology is grounded in an understanding of both Bible and tradition as dynamic sources of guidance, that is to say inspiration from one context made relevant to the current situation through interaction with the world today in which the living God is constantly active. This interpretation is critical in understanding Jenkins' thought in general and the relationship of his Christology in particular to his social thought.

Jenkins' Christology has been briefly sketched above, but as Jenkins' approach is generally broadly philosophical as regards reference to Christian traditions or biblical passages it is perhaps helpful to explore three strands which anchor Jenkins' theology and can be identified to a greater or lesser extent in the majority of his writing. These are namely the inspiration of the Old Testament, whether in the form of 'Abrahamic faith' or of inspirational prophecy, the person of Jesus as an expression of Divine Love and therefore Divine human interaction as well as a sign of the Holy Trinity expressing the universal

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[221] Jenkins, *'Doctrines Which Drive One to Politics'*, 148
[222] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe*, 91-2
[223] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe*, 91

implications of the love of God and thirdly the experience of God in the world today, prompting Christians not to become complacent and to renew the work of God's Church to bring in God's future. These three elements can be seen in this form in Jenkins' address to the Modern Church People's Union in 1966 entitled 'Where we are now and where does God want us to go?'[224] but are as already stated evident elsewhere. What is of particular interest in the context of this study is the orthodoxy at the heart of Jenkins' theology. As Ross has noted much of Jenkins' theology can be said to be distinctly mainstream[225] so we need to look further in order to explain the controversy which he at times generated. This will be addressed in the context of his ministry and therefore of a discussion of his role within the establishment, but it is vital at this juncture to be aware of the ambiguity as we move from a discussion of his theology in general to an evaluation of the role which his theology has played in the formation of his social thought.

Jenkins' Christian Social Theory

The theological foundation of Jenkins' social thought is perhaps best illustrated with reference to his writings on the politicisation of Christianity as it is here that Jenkins has formulated his ideas in direct response to those who advocate a Christianity defined by personal religiosity and politically neutral. E.R Norman's Reith Lectures of 1978 provide a perfect example of the antithesis of Jenkins' position not only because their focus on personal spirituality and private morality mirrors the approach of Jenkins', as will be shown, but also because the attention and acclaim they received in the country and amongst churchgoers concerned by falling attendance and moral standards ensured that Jenkins views would by no means be taken for granted or as the norm, while providing for scholars today an illustration of the polarisation of views on the subject even within the Church of England.

In a direct response to Norman's lectures 'Doctrines Which Drive One to Politics', Jenkins admits to concern over the popularity of Normans' stance and

[224] Jenkins, *Still Living with Questions,* 48-9
[225] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 37

attributes this not to a misunderstanding of traditional Christian doctrine, but rather a misrepresentation of the distinctive nature of Christianity. It has already been noted that Jenkins Christological beliefs are from the mainstream tradition and here he argues that on this score he does not wish to take issue with Norman. Rather he believes the differences in their positions appear when the issue of how this belief is relevant today is addressed. Jenkins threefold appeal to Bible and tradition as sketched above is once again in evidence as he argues that in the Bible and Christian tradition

> "God is known to be God. He is known in and through Jesus. He is also known in and through the contemporary. The first and third propositions are typical of prophetic religion. The second is that which constitutes the emergence of Christianity as the fulfilment of this prophetic tradition."[226]

Norman's focus on the personal is he argues therefore not only unfaithful to this tradition, but also no help in recommending it as a faith for today.[227] In direct contrast to Norman therefore Jenkins believes that " the traditional Christian doctrines of Incarnation and Trinity today 'drive one to politics.'"[228] For if God cannot be encountered in daily life and in our relationships with others we have no relationship with the living God, Jenkins maintains, but rather have reduced God to a 'myth' sustained by adherents of a cult fighting against the realities of the world, which has little relation to a message of salvation for the whole world but also will not be sustainable if and when culture changes.[229] It is in other words in his view natural and essential that the church should be involved in politics and as Ross has noted

> "He was and remains quite clear that the church should be concerned with politics and is surprised that anyone should take the contrary view."[230]

This is a stance which should come of no surprise to someone who has read Jenkins' theology as outlined above. His position concentrates, in the words of

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[226] Jenkins, 'Doctrines Which Drive One to Politics', 141
[227] Jenkins, 'Doctrines Which Drive One to Politics', 148
[228] Jenkins, 'Doctrines Which Drive One to Politics', 142
[229] Jenkins, 'Doctrines Which Drive One to Politics', 145 - 6
[230] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 109

Ross, on 'the interaction of a transcendent with the reality of human anguish.' The person of Jesus serves therefore to illustrate not only God's concern for humanity, but the intrinsic value of all humanity and therefore, according to Jenkins, the way in which Christians can enter into the flesh and blood realities of the Passion today is by engaging with the 'social misery and economic deprivation' of the Soweto-like places of the world. An involvement which is unavoidably political.[231]

In light of this revelation of the political nature of Jenkins thought and therefore his indubitable engagement with practical social issues of the day it is important to examine his understanding of the nature of salvation before proceeding to a fuller exposition of the themes in his social thought. As Jenkins himself has noted he believes that it is the role of faith to seek salvation not solutions [232] so an understanding of his view of the interaction between soteriology and sociology is fundamental for an understanding of his social thought.

Jenkins' provides a systematic exposition of his soteriology in his book The '*Contradiction of Christianity*'[233] a book inspired by his experiences while working for the WCC. Jenkins builds on his motif of 'Transcendence in the midst' in claiming first that since salvation comes from God who is both divine and present in all human realities, salvation is for and concerned with all people in all ages. Salvation is in other words universal, but he goes on to say cannot be understood in an identical manner at all times and places for

> "meanings have to be expressed in language which is of a particular time, place, culture and meanings have to be apprehended in the lives of men lived out in a particular time, place and culture."[234]

We therefore receive the gift of salvation in our daily lives, as there is nowhere else for us to live out our humanity but in our present situation and human

[231] Jenkins, 'Doctrines Which Drive One to Politics', 148
[232] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 118
[233] Jenkins, *The Contradiction of Christianity*
[234] Jenkins, *The Contradiction of Christianity,* 30

relationships. So salvation is dependent on God, but received through human relationships and since the message of salvation is a universal message it requires, according to Jenkins, action on the part of Christians to work for the fulfilment of human identity and not a retreat into a tribal religion.[235] To be human is, he maintains, a process involving relationships with God and with one another "Being and becoming human is basically a relational matter."[236] So a threat to human identity comes when relationships are abused, unbalanced or destructive and if Christians aim to pursue salvation they also need to understand its communal nature, pursue good relationships at all levels and so work for healthy communities locally, nationally and globally. Since communities involve politics a Christian commitment to salvation as far as Jenkins is concerned includes an interaction with politics.

So although Christians should seek salvation not solutions

> "The message of salvation, which transcends all solutions and all failures to find solutions gives us renewed hope and purpose as we face failures, recognise limits and seek repeatedly to renew projects and programmes pursuing short and medium term aims in our society."[237]

The language of salvation is, Jenkins maintains dead and ineffectual in society today, because Christians have allowed it to become cultic and individualistic.[238] The Church, he goes on to say, is not about religion, but about God and his concern for the world. A living theology therefore involves a social theory, which in Jenkins' thought can be seen to form three clear, though interacting strands. Ross draws out what he terms as Jenkins' themes of work in this area and terms them as firstly a sense of interdependence, secondly an understanding of the vulnerable and thirdly cohesion and consensus in society.[239]

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[235] Jenkins, *The Contradiction of Christianity,* 32
[236] Jenkins, *The Contradiction of Christianity,* 26
[237] David Jenkins, *God, Jesus and Life in the Spirit,* (SCM Press, London, 1988), 146
[238] Jenkins, *God, Jesus and Life in the Spirit,* 21
[239] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 138

The notion of interdependence is for Jenkins grounded in the biblical tradition of God working in partnership with humanity. This has already been explored to some extent in a discussion of Jenkins' theology, so here it will suffice to draw attention to the traditional roots of this belief and explore what this meant for Jenkins' social thought. Contrary to the Conservative governments of the 1980's Jenkins believed in the existence of society or to use Christian terminology he believed in the importance of neighbourly behaviour. In trying to live neighbourly lives both at a political and a personal, practical level, Jenkins argued, Christians would be responding to the two greatest commandments. Love God and Love neighbour.[240] We have already seen how Jenkins argues that to be human involves relationships and in his social thought Jenkins builds on this.

> "Love" he posits "says that every human being is absolutely valuable and the potential whole is totally valuable"[241]

> so "the promise of human identity is the possibility of relationships at all levels that will permit the full development of that community and communion whose possibilities can be glimpsed in fully face-to-face relationships and in loving between human persons."[242]

Jenkins however writes as one influenced by the Marxist critique of structures and when he speaks of relationships refers to relationships at all levels personal, political social and economic. Thus the insight of love requires an acceptance of responsibility on the part of Christians within the social structures to work for equality and within this context even to offer sacrifice.[243] Sacrifice is, he argues, a challenge to us, not one we can issue to others and has to be understood within the wider discussion of freedom, responsibility and community. Having introduced to the discussion an awareness of the role of structures and institutions Jenkins however always returns to the role of the individual. In his own words

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[240] Jenkins, *God, Jesus and Life in the Spirit,* 34
[241] Jenkins, *The Contradiction of Christianity,* 24
[242] Jenkins, *The Contradiction of Christianity,* 28
[243] Jenkins, *The Contradiction of Christianity,* 39

> "individual persons are of worth, and individualism may be at the heart of a Christian understanding of things, but this does not mean that the individual is a solitary unit independent of community.'[244]

In other words if the community has value it is because all individuals have value and here we can see a direct connection with the second theme of Jenkins' social thought, understanding the vulnerable. This strand can be interpreted at two levels and is thereby indicative of the nature of Jenkins' social thought. In identifying this theme Ross draws attention to Jenkins' emphasis on support for those marginalised by society, which he argues should be shown in the fight for justice not well meaning charity, however the second level is equally important namely the judgement on the structures of society that can be discerned through an honest assessment of the plight of the poor. The first aspect is best summed up in Jenkins' own words

> "we are not called to offer charity... We are called to risk finding ways of involvement with 'the marginals' in a common search for a wider human identity."[245]

Jenkins phraseology here makes it clear where he feels Christian priorities lie, but also connects his social thought directly with the central themes of his theology. He talks of risk in the same way as he identifies the risks that God takes in the incarnation and he focuses once again on the importance of human identity. In recognising this Jenkins' reveals his conviction that Christians are called not only to reassess the priorities of the secular world themselves, but also to draw the attention of the world at large, both of oppressors and oppressed to the arguments. For this insight he gives credit to William Temple, who consistently argued that justice in politics required the education of people at all levels of society. For Jenkins "working at the necessary rearrangement of priorities involves education, re-thinking and conversion at the level of institutions, professions and pressure groups."[246] Here we see therefore the importance of the second aspect of this theme in Jenkins' thought. Prophetic references to the lives of the poor confirm his understanding that when

[244] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe*, 99
[245] Jenkins, *The Contradiction of Christianity,* 120
[246] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe*, 191

attention is paid to the injustices suffered by those on the margins of society we are made aware of the judgement of God on the structures of society.[247] Or to put this in secular language an informed assessment of life in a city today "brings into focus the pressures of modern economic life which take away the identities of so many and leave them with no roots or power." [248] Jenkins' language here betrays the influence on his thought of the insights and methodology of liberation theology although his critical assessment of the insights of this school of thought are on a par with his judgement of Marxism, discussed above. Here it will suffice to mention the fact that an awareness of the power of structures and institutions whether religious, political or economic is a basic assumption underlying Jenkins' social thought.

In light of this it is important to be aware of the implications that this viewpoint has not only for the lives of individual Christians engaging with the structures on a daily basis, but also for the Church as an institution. "I would not be a bishop" Jenkins wrote in 1988 "if I were not absolutely clear that even the church cannot keep a good God down."[249] The role of the Church as a social institution is in other words ambiguous in Jenkins' opinion, even if he does not doubt its ultimate value as a servant of God. Here in Jenkins' social thought the ambiguity he felt in his own life towards the Church as an institution finds expression at a broader level. Jenkins is a great believer in hope. It was no accident that his controversial enthronement sermon of 1984 was entitled 'The Cost of Hope'.[250] Men and women of vision, can he believes achieve almost anything and the Church should enable great things to happen. His concern is that this is not always the case. This is partly due, he argues to the Church's obsession with internal discussions, which has already been mentioned, but that is not the end of the story. The role that the Church plays in society is, he feels, fundamentally flawed in a manner that inhibits its social thinking and action. The Church has to face the fact, he maintains, that 'we are no longer the Church in the Land in the old historical and all embracing sense'[251] and it is

[247] Jenkins, *The Contradiction of Christianity,* 47 -8
[248] Jenkins, *The Contradiction of Christianity,* 48
[249] Jenkins, *God, Jesus and Life in the Spirit,* 24
[250] David Jenkins, *God, Politics and the Future,* (SCM Press, London, 1988), 3-10
[251] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 183

interesting that in writing 'we' he includes himself in this. An earlier slightly tongue in cheek remark that

> "It has often been said of the Church of England that it is in favour of change as long as it doesn't make any difference"[252]

helps to explain this position. Jenkins himself remarks that this trait may well be both British and applicable to the wealthier members of society and it is certainly conceivable that his own orthodoxy has its roots precisely in this combination of factors. His time abroad however gave him a different perspective in this respect and it is perhaps this questioning perspective which he hopes to convince the Church of in his arguments in this area. In *'The Contradiction of Christianity'*, a book which came out of his experiences while working for the WCC, Jenkins argues therefore that the Church needs to distance itself from a relationship with the 'powers that be'. It is, he argues

> "almost certainly a mistake to want any church which has power in these structures to use it as a power and pressure group. This is simply to play the power game."[253]

The Church must on the contrary, he claims, repent of ever having taken such a position and recognise that any power which it has as an institution, will not be because of its Christian nature, but rather because of its institutional nature and consequently will be significantly compromised as far as the execution of creative social work is concerned. The Church should in other words renounce its power and seek disestablishment in order to truly fulfil its purpose and enable radical social thinking to take place. This viewpoint can also be seen to have its roots in Jenkins' firm belief in the importance of questions as opposed to answers. If the Church has any role to play therefore it is, he argues, not to wield power itself, but humbly to remind those in power that no one has any absolute answers.[254] Christians should therefore see part of their role in society as the prophetic role of asking the difficult questions[255] a task which must fall

[252] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe*, 181
[253] Jenkins, *The Contradiction of Christianity*, 131
[254] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe*, 106
[255] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe*, 104

particularly on those who are in prominent positions, namely bishops [256]. All Christians must however, he is quick to note when writing on this topic, remember that they are called to develop discipleship in social ways[257] and in partnership with people involved in the problem areas of society of all faiths and traditions.[258]

This leads on to the third theme of Jenkins' social thought, his advocacy of a society that values cohesion and consensus. This reflects Jenkins' emphasis on the value of all people as well as a broader concern with the community both on a national and an international plane. This concern is reflected in Jenkins' opposition to the sectarian model of Church. Christian faith he argues is not just for Christians. In fact he refers directly to William Temple in saying that 'the Church is the one club which exists for people who are not its members.'[259] In taking this line Temple is reinforcing his opinions that churchmen and women should be involved in society at large and not only this but that the Church itself should work for the good of the community, both nationally and locally rather than remaining preoccupied with internal matters. These points have however already been made to some extent. What is innovative at this stage in Jenkins' social thought is the emphasis he places in this context on the need for pluralism and the consequent implications for his understanding of truth and authority. The reference here to pluralism requires some explanation. It could easily be assumed that someone with Jenkins' orthodox tendencies would wish to emphasise a Christian understanding of truth above all other interpretations, but this would be to misrepresent Jenkins' fundamental belief in the value of all human life. For Jenkins the Gospel is about "the true and living God of all people in the total universe."[260] So truth is not exclusive to Christians, rather Christians need to engage with other expressions of faith and understandings of the world before pronouncing on religious or social issues.

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[256] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe*, 106
[257] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe*, 109
[258] Jenkins, *'Putting Theology to Work'*, 118
[259] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe*, 28
[260] Presentation at Lambeth 1988 in Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins* p 153

> "Assertions about Christian doctrine and Christian duty should, out of respect for God and for our fellow human beings, be restrained. They should be made only after a rigorous attempt to check up on the understanding of the world to which these assertions are addressed and after a sensitive attempt to understand the selves who want these assertions to be made."[261]

Christians should in other words reject any form of exclusivism and be prepared to work both ecumenically and with those of other faiths as well as experts in social issues in the secular world, not least those who are experts because they live as marginalised members of society. Christians need he believes, to learn to work ecumenically, not in terms of official doctrinal agreements and documents, but practically in a recognition of the diversity of human culture and in order to make positive use of the opportunities provided by the remnants of a parochial system which still, in theory at least covers the whole of the country.[262] The Church could, he feels, make use of its place in the community to help that community as long as it is prepared to recognise the plurality of human culture and reject the Church of 'Christendom' as this remnant of history constricts the Church today.[263] Ross argues that Jenkins sees secularisation as both a threat and an opportunity [264] and it is here that we see the clearest example of this.

These three themes in Jenkins social thought as outlined above can therefore be seen to be interconnecting and not only that, but to relate directly to themes in Jenkins' theology. In light of the detailed discussions above Jenkins social thought can perhaps be best summarised in his own words as follows

> "We are required to make determined and disciplined efforts to draw on our Christian experience and traditions in relation to present personal, social and political pressures. Our object is to hit on proposals which we can implement ourselves and commend to others. What are the differences in the way we see things, in the proposals we put forward and in the ways we would try them out, which are suggested to us by the insights of faith? The beginning of putting theology to work is to take a

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[261] Jenkins, '*Canterbury Tales or Canterbury Pilgrims?*', 242-3
[262] David Jenkins, *God, Miracle and the Church of England,* (SCM Press, London, 1988), 108
[263] Jenkins, *God, Miracle and the Church of England,* 108
[264] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 196

> long hard look at whatever human problem or possibility we are particularly concerned with and to ask ourselves 'What is the sort of theological concept, story or symbol which might be of help in this context'? Out of our considered answers must come our proposals. Of course, resoluteness in making proposals must be matched with tentativeness in working at their application, humility in correcting understandings and readiness for new meanings from what is experienced when the proposals are followed up."[265]

This approach is one that Jenkins followed consistently throughout his career though most obviously in this form following his WCC posting, as can be seen by the subtle, but nonetheless obvious influence of liberation theology in the passage above, an influence Jenkins refered to more directly in 1985 when giving the Hibbert Lecture. Here he sketched the outline of a Liberation theology for the West. Such a theology rising out of the needs of people in this country should, he argues, firstly recognise the judgement of God on society and use resources fairly to develop the common good. Secondly it should highlight the urgency of that judgement and demand action today. Thirdly it should be open to innovative solutions and be prepared to take risks and should be committed to the building of communities at all levels.[266] Jenkins had been, as we have seen, writing on this theme for many years, but at the time of the delivery of the Hibbert lectures was settling into his ministry as a diocesan bishop. It is through this ministry that Jenkins made an impact on the social thought of the Church and developed the pastoral and practical side of his ministry which had received scant attention during his years writing academic and what can perhaps be termed 'conference' theology. Before we proceed to an analysis of the key points of Jenkins Episcopal ministry it is therefore imperative to asses the impact that the Episcopal role could be said to have had on Jenkins social thought and the dissemination of his ideas both to the Church and the nation.

Ministry

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[265] Jenkins, 'Putting Theology to Work', 116-7

[266] Harrison, Ted, *The Durham Phenomenon,* (Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1985), 122-3

Whether or not the influence of the Church has diminished as a result of secularisation, as numerous social scientists and theologians claim, the office of bishop still commands a certain amount of respect and attention in society at large. This has two distinct, although connected, influences on a bishop's social thought and practice. Firstly a bishop's standing as an authority figure means that he will not infrequently be consulted as to his opinion on matters of public concern and is therefore forced by circumstance to have an opinion on a whole range of issues and therefore to have thought them through. Secondly, as Medhurst and Moyser have observed 'The charisma of (Episcopal) office can be used to focus attention upon major problems.'[267] Bishops can, in other words, use their office as a platform to highlight issues which they wish to bring into the public domain. People pay attention to the role if not to the individual. In Jenkins case however the boundaries become blurred at this stage and it becomes necessary to consider the role not just of the charisma of the office, but also the role played by the modern mass media. The media, with its focus on personality adds an extra complication as we explore the dichotomy between citizen and churchman revealed in Jenkins. Medhurst and Moyser note that many bishops are not well equipped to deal with the demands of the media, but note that the publicity given to Jenkins highlights the possibilities that exist for communicating issues of a theological nature to wider audiences.[268] The publicity to which they refer was given to Jenkins throughout his career as a bishop, but has its roots in a series of incidents surrounding the appointment and consecration of Jenkins to the See of Durham, now commonly known as the "Durham Affair". As Ted Harrison notes there was no hint of protest when Jenkins appointment was first made public. Although he was known in academic circles as a liberal orthodox and occasionally slightly provocative theologian he had no public image. This was all to change with his appearance on a television debate programme 'Credo' in April 1984. Jenkins' comments on this show led to accusations that he did not believe in the Virgin birth and was therefore, as someone who could not affirm the Creeds of the Church, was not fit to become a bishop. A campaign was started to oppose his

[267] Kenneth Medhurst, and George Moyser, *Church and Politics in a Secular Age,* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988), 304
[268] Medhurst and Moyser, Church and Politics in a Secular Age, 303

consecration, notable not least because it united conservative and evangelical factions of the Church. The doctrinal details are not important to this study, but what is significant is the different understandings of the situation. Jenkins was branded a heretic by many in the Church while he and his supporters continued to assert his fundamental orthodoxy in a spirited if bemused rebuttal of the charges. Harrison amongst others blames the confusion on Jenkins' seeming inability to express himself clearly[269] and certainly as the transcripts of the 'Credo' programme show[270] he had a tendency to speak in long and complicated sentences, which when reported in the press could easily be confusing in themselves when quoted in full and which were always ripe for selective citation. Jenkins, it seems, found it hard if not impossible to adapt the language of academia for the public at large leaving him open to charges that he was threatening the simple faith of a large sector of the population. Jenkins however, ever the teacher, merely felt that they should be challenged if they were to fulfil their potential.[271] This should not be surprising to those who have read any amount of Jenkins' work. As this study has highlighted for Jenkins the need to question in all areas of society including theology is not only important, but vital. This is the real crux of the issue as regards the "Durham Affair". As Jenkins himself points out at the time of the controversy the argument centred not around whether the position he held was valid, but rather whether David Jenkins the bishop was entitled to hold publicly the views he had held as a professor.[272] He made a conscious decision when made bishop not to separate the bishop from the individual Christian believer[273] and it was this which earned him his title of the most controversial bishop in England. Many of Jenkins' friends claimed at the time that they did not recognise in the media image the David Jenkins that they knew [274] and this is perhaps due to some extent to the way the media chose to portray Jenkins, but also has to do with the way he portrayed himself. The true academic, Jenkins often conveys a theology or theory at the expense of a more personal faith. Jenkins the

[269] Harrison, *The Durham Phenomenon,* 27
[270] Harrison *The Durham Phenomenon,* 14-28
[271] Harrison *The Durham Phenomenon,* 172
[272] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 22
[273] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 21
[274] Harrison *The Durham Phenomenon,* 86

individual can be glimpsed occasionally in his reactions to opposition such as the following in May 1984:

> "What I find particularly hurtful is that people think I am some cold detached, academic, questioning person... Actually I am a very warm, committed, questioning person."[275]

But usually the academic don takes over in his search for truth and his eagerness to encourage people to question and stretch themselves. Jenkins, Harrison notes,

> "found himself with a nation as a tutorial group. If the role of a don is to probe, provoke and even disturb students into producing their best ideas, he was not going to change that donnish technique just because his audience was larger and less well prepared."[276]

Jenkins' ministry was therefore played out against a background of controversy and media attention, which meant that his every comment was practically guaranteed a public airing. As Ross has noted this was not solely the result of personal factors, but, 'reflected the contemporary context of British political history, and the place of the churches in that picture'[277]. The Church emerged during Jenkins' time in office as an alternative to an ineffective political opposition and so those bishops such as Jenkins who were prepared to publicly criticise government policy found themselves in the limelight. This issue will be addressed in greater detail as the background to the *'Faith in the City'* report is assessed. What is of interest here is the fact that Jenkins received much more attention than his fellow bishops once he had been branded as a 'turbulent priest'[278] and the effect that this had both on his social thought and practice and on the stance of the Church on social issues.

Speaking at Jenkins' consecration service in York Minster Denis Nineham reflected that while bishops are generally speaking, generally speaking[279] he

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[275] Harrison *The Durham Phenomenon,* 51
[276] Harrison *The Durham Phenomenon,* 172
[277] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 142
[278] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 4
[279] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 4

believed that Jenkins would be an exception to this standard. While it is true to say therefore, that Jenkins prefers to deal with the broad philosophical picture, rather than becoming tied down in the details, it cannot be denied that he fuelled the controversy surrounding him by speaking out on social issues during his Episcopal ministry and thus upheld the Anglican tradition of prophetic social interaction and questioning.

Jenkins' enthronement sermon 'The Cost of Hope' set the tone for his clashes with the government as well as once again attracting media attention. In this sermon he addressed directly the issue of the miners' strike currently raging in his new diocese and suggested a compromise by both sides. The press however picked up on what they perceived as a personal attack on the Chairman of the Coal board who Jenkins, perhaps unwisely, described as an 'elderly imported American'. While the love of the press of personality clashes was to mean that this one phrase was to dominate the press it did however mean that Jenkins general comments did not go unnoticed. As the Archbishop of York's comment that he perhaps should not have criticised anyone by name in a sermon, but that the focus on the issues of the strike, so pertinent at this time in the North East, was entirely appropriate[280] shows, Jenkins was not alone amongst the hierarchy of the Church in believing that that the church should adopt a critical position. Whether or not Jenkins' confrontational style was appropriate or not is therefore of minimal importance to this study, as what he achieved by his outbursts was a wider debate of the issues than had previously been evident.[281] Jenkins may not for example have succeeded in resolving the miners' strike as a result of his sermon, but neither was this his sole aim. As has already been mentioned Jenkins preferred look to the bigger picture, a stance perhaps most clearly expressed by the man himself on a second appearance on the 'Credo' programme in March 1985 where, when pressed about his criticism of the government line on unemployment benefits, Jenkins retorted

[280] Harrison *The Durham Phenomenon,* 99
[281] Harrison *The Durham Phenomenon,* 101

> "I haven't got an alternative strategy. It isn't my job to have an alternative strategy. It is my job to press people with the moral choices – to draw attention to some political choices."[282]

In general terms therefore it can be said that Jenkins saw his task in living out his social theory as one of challenge to the existing order, offering a voice to the marginalised.

Following his enthronement sermon and the subsequent publicity Jenkins entered into public correspondence with the Secretary of State for Energy, Peter Walker. During this exchange of letters he criticised unemployment policy and accused the government not only of not caring, but of not caring that it did not care.[283] The policies pursued by the government, he claimed, destroyed community[284] and it is here we begin to see where Jenkins social theory connects directly with his political outbursts. It was the divisive stance of the government which most appalled Jenkins, represented by Mrs Thatcher's infamous comment that there is no such thing as society. He saw this individualistic trend at work in society in a wide variety of ways and this led him to speak out in general terms against consumerism[285] and more specifically in the House of Lords against reforms to the NHS, where the move to refer to patients as consumers represented, he felt, a negative understanding of human beings[286]. No area of public policy which impinged on the Christian values of Justice and Love in community[287] was immune from Jenkins vociferous opposition. For much of this study we have concentrated on practical social issues, but Jenkins saw fit to widen his concerns to address directly economic policy at large and in particular the wholesale adoption by those with power in business and politics of the belief that market forces should reign supreme. Jenkins feared that there is now an assumption that the 'common good' which unites society is no longer shared values or morals, but rather the Market.[288] Jenkins opposition to this taking for granted of market forces was a constant

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[282] in Harrison *The Durham Phenomenon,* 145
[283] Harrison *The Durham Phenomenon,* 105
[284] Harrison *The Durham Phenomenon,* 105
[285] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 136
[286] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 122
[287] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 101
[288] Jenkins, David, *Market Whys and Human Wherefores,*(Casell, London, 2000), 11

theme of his work, though his most comprehensive and detailed investigation of the issue did not come until 2000, after his retirement, with the publication of Market Whys and Human Wherefores[289]. Here he writes about the 'Invisible Hand' of the Market which

> "relieves us of moral decisions in our business, commercial and purchasing affairs while promising a growing prosperity and affluence. An affluence we can then use in pursuing whatever moral ends seem individually proper to us in our family and private affairs. This indeed does look like a providential dispensation which has dispensed with Providence."[290]

God, community and moral considerations have in other words, he believes been sacrificed to the prevailing political ideology whereby the market is paramount. This attack on market values and the ideologies which adopt them was intended as an academic assessment of the issues, but Jenkins also took issue with such assumptions at a more practical level. During the general election campaign of 1987, for example, Jenkins explicitly endorsed support for the Labour Party though he had severed all official links with the party on becoming a bishop, on the grounds that the Church's leadership should not commit to any one secular cause.[291] In 1985 he spoke in a House of Lords debate on the deregulation of local bus services arguing here and in subsequent correspondence with the Transport secretary not only that it was immoral as it would effect the quality of life for ordinary people[292], but also that the extent to which the government was promoting the free market amounted to idolatry.[293] Here can be seen therefore in one specific example the combination in Jenkins' ministry of his philosophical opposition to the political ideologies of the day at an intellectual level, combined with his concern for the ordinary people of his diocese. Jenkins himself claims that since the early days of his ministry he has tried to combine 'pastoral and worship work on the one hand and academic work concerned with thinking things out on the other.'[294] Even a brief assessment of his life and work would lead one to the conclusion that he has

[289] Jenkins, David, *Market Whys and Human Wherefores*
[290] Jenkins, David, *Market Whys and Human Wherefores,* 63
[291] Medhurst and Moyser, *Church and Politics in a Secular Age,* 128
[292] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 120
[293] Harrison *The Durham Phenomenon,* 140
[294] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 10

done much more of the latter than the former in terms of hands on work having never been a parish priest and even when working for the WCC travelling little in the developing world except to attend conferences[295]. The question is to what extent does this matter in terms of the implementation and impact of his social thought. Jenkins, Harrison notes, genuinely enjoyed meeting the people of his diocese[296] and, as he showed when preaching in one colliery village on the theme of community in the face of disaster, believed it was the role of the Church to be in the community helping to overcome helplessness.[297] This therefore involved, he believed, taking the opportunities at his disposal to help local communities at a national level. This could explain his use of his seat in the House of Lords and of his position in general to draw attention to and lobby on issues of concern although it cannot go unremarked in this context that when writing in 1976 Jenkins had argued that in order for constructive social work to take place the Church should renounce any secular power it could be said to have, as such power come not from its Christian, but rather its institutional nature. It is interesting to note that these earlier reflections came from a time when Jenkins had little or no experience of the institutional workings of the Church and it can therefore be suggested not that Jenkins changed his views of establishment in any fundamental manner, but rather that he came to reluctantly accept its use as part of his duty as he had reluctantly accepted the bishopric itself. It may be, as his wife suggests when commenting on his acceptance of the appointment, that he saw the appointment as a duty, but a duty to serve "God the disturber"[298] in continuing to fight for the Church which he both loved and felt stifled by. Compromise is not something perhaps which comes naturally to Jenkins, yet this is the way he himself describes his acceptance of the grandeur of Auckland Castle as his residence.[299] This could be called compromising ones principles, but in light of all of Jenkins' work and his determination to carry on questioning in the face of all opposition and publicity it seems more likely to be a good example of the Anglican tradition of

[295] Ross, *The Work of David Jenkins,* 81
[296] Harrison *The Durham Phenomenon,* 174
[297] Harrison *The Durham Phenomenon,* 110
[298] Harrison *The Durham Phenomenon,* 172
[299] Jenkins and Jenkins, *Free to Believe,* 13

seeking the middle way, a reasonable compromise Jenkins was prepared to make in order to be able to further the tradition of Anglican Christian Social Thought working for Justice and Love in the Community.

CHAPTER 4: THE 'FAITH IN THE CITY' REPORT

This chapter is different from the previous two in that it focuses on the work of a committee, rather than of any one individual and it does so because the committee structure is now an integral part of the organisation and public face of the Church. The progressive move towards a more collective form of decision making was consolidated with the foundation of the General Synod of the Church of England in 1970. The House of Bishops retains its importance as a source of power in the Church, but from this date the decision making processes of the Church have included a much more significant degree of lay involvement. So it is that this chapter on committees will complement the others on individual bishops.

In the time of Archbishop Temple the Archbishop was the Church as far as public declarations of theology were concerned and though even today bishops receive a significant amount of media attention a study of the *'Faith in the City'*[300] report is necessary if we are to arrive at a comprehensive picture of Anglican Christian Social Theory at the end of the twentieth century. This study will assess not just the attitude of the Church of England, but also gain an indication of how far the leadership of the Church was in tune with the majority of Church people in the nation as well as the population in general. FITC was compiled by a commission made up of clergymen and laypeople, many of whom came from an academic background, but it is possible to see how far the wider Church was in sympathy with the views of the commission both from the immediate reaction to the publication of the report and by assessing the extent of the follow up of the recommendations five and ten years on.

Responses to the report are therefore as important to this analysis as the report itself. This study will therefore rely not just on FITC, but also on the follow up

[300] The Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas. *Faith in the City: A Call for Action by Church and Nation,* (Church House Publishing, London, 1985). Henceforth FITC

reports and connected documentation, including the independent work of those who contributed to it. This will provide a breadth of information ensuring that the intentions of those involved in the production of the report as well as their conclusions are represented. For an understanding of the perspective that those involved in the process have on the role of the Church in the welfare debate is almost as useful in building a picture of their social theory as the product of their deliberations is.

The Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas[301] was appointed in July 1983 with the following terms of reference:

> "To examine the strengths, insights, problems and needs of the Church's life and mission in Urban Priority Areas [302] and, as a result to reflect on the challenge which God may be making to Church and Nation: and to make recommendations to appropriate bodies."[303]

The study which this occasioned was to lead to the publication of *'Faith in the City'* and it is important to note not only that this report is not 'freestanding' but was one important link in a chain of events, but also its relation to the power structures in the Church of England. The process which led to the publication of FITC can be said to have begun in 1981 when Canon Eric James wrote a letter to The Times highlighting the condition of the inner cities, clearly visible to all in a year which had seen the Brixton riots, and urging the appointment of an Archbishop's Commission.[304] James had also written to the Archbishop and the urban bishops to whom he referred the matter then invited James to address them on the subject. Initially sceptical to the notion of a Commission these bishops, having heard James speak in detail on a range of socio-economic realities drafted proposals for a Commission to be presented to the Archbishop who then set the wheels in motion.[305] This background information is useful in highlighting the fact that the report, while the product

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[301] Henceforth ACUPA
[302] Henceforth UPAs
[303] The Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas. *Faith in the City*, iii
[304] Henry Clark, *The Church Under Thatcher,* (SPCK, London, 1993), 80
[305] Clark, *The Church Under Thatcher*, 80

of a committee with a broad base of both clergy and lay membership, was in its very existence the response of the Episcopal leadership of the Church to the promptings of a concerned individual drawing attention to the social welfare problems of the day. In the context of this study it is therefore important to understand both what the churchmen involved felt that they were doing and what justification they had for this type of response.

Medhurst and Moyser have offered a twofold explanation of the actions of the Church in this field post 1979, which also sheds light on the process which led to FITC. Firstly, they argue that the challenges presented to the Church by government policies in a changed political context led the Church to seek to define its own position and not only clarify the official stance of the Church, but also provide some positive alternatives. Secondly, in the face of a political vacuum created by the absence of a strong opposition, the Church both took on the role of and was embraced by others as critic and opponent of government policy in a variety of fields.[306] In these terms therefore FITC could, they argue be understood as

> "a redefinition by churchmen of their own Christian insights in the light of changing circumstances. It could also, at least for a while, have been construed as a matter of the Church's leaders being constrained to accept the role of a surrogate political opposition."[307]

The changing circumstances which Medhurst and Moyser refer to were therefore clearly of profound importance to the formation of Church policy in the 1980's. This can be explored under two headings: firstly the social situation in general, and secondly and more particularly the political situation characterised by the dominance of the Thatcherite administration.

Social Situation

This study is not the place to undertake a full assessment of the circumstances of English society that, as has already been mentioned, has been undertaken by

[306] Kenneth Medhurst and George Moyser, *Church and Politics in a Secular Age,* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988), 297
[307] Medhurst and Moyser, *Church and Politics in a Secular Age,* 297

a number of academics when discussing the theory of secularisation. Here it will suffice to highlight some dominant social features. The term Postmodern, or occasionally late modern, is used so frequently today and in such a variety of contexts that it is difficult to arrive at any one definition of the concept. It is generally used to describe advanced modern society where from the 1960s onwards industrial dominance has given way to the service industry[308] and the traditional consensus of opinion surrounding traditional beliefs and values is breaking down. This can be demonstrated in a variety of ways, but in relation to the Church is frequently referred to in terms of the demise of Christendom and the existence of a plural society, particularly illustrated by a study of the phenomena of pluralism and secularisation. The notion of secularisation and the academic debate surrounding it has been addressed in an earlier chapter. The notion of pluralism is however in need of more accurate definition. In the words of Forrester,

> "The ending of the old consensus has served to underline the fact that Britain is a plural society, in which a rich diversity of racial groups, religions, political, ethical and social opinions, and more general world views exist side by side."[309]

The question is however what this implies for the Church? Medhurst and Moyser are convinced that the challenge for the Church is to come to terms with 'ideological pluralism' and to engage with " moral, intellectual, social and political sources of value lying beyond the ecclesiastical domain."[310] For if the Church is to retain its role as the guardian of public values, Preston maintains, pluralism means that it will have to consider new ways of influencing society without controlling it[311] and of helping people to arrive at some common values and convictions in the midst of this pluralism.[312]

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[308] Peter Sedgwick in Sedgwick, (ed.)God in the City: Essays and Reflections from the Archbishop's Urban Theology Group, (Mowbray, London, 1995), xii

[309] Duncan B. Forrester, *Christianity and the Future of Welfare* (Epworth Press, London, 1985), 65

[310] Medhurst and Moyser, *Church and Politics in a Secular Age,* 48

[311] Ronald Preston, *Politics the Church and the Gospel in the late Twentieth Century,* (SCM Press, London, 1983), 135

[312] Preston, *Politics the Church and the Gospel in the late Twentieth Century*, 131

As Edwards has argued, the fact that Christian commentary now had to address a more fragmented society than that which had existed in the 1940s made the task more complex [313] as there could no longer be said to be a consensus of opinion as far as the welfare debate is concerned. The authors of the Board for Social Responsibility[314] report *Not Just for the Poor*[315] point out however, that it is 'easy to overestimate the degree of agreement there was in the 1940's about aims, objectives and means' though there was sufficient 'collective agreement' to drive through legislation which formed the foundations of collective responsibility in the nation.[316] The dangers of surveying the past through 'rose tinted spectacles' (for those who wish to champion a dominant state church) are in other words being brought to attention.

At the other end of the spectrum the impact of the phenomenon usually referred to as 'secular Anglicanism' must be also be considered[317]. While it cannot be denied that pluralism was a clear motif in the closing decades of the twentieth century there was, some argue, still an expectation that religion had a significant role to play in national life [318] and that the Church of England could to some extent act as the conscience of the nation, albeit now as one of a number of interest groups.[319] Habgood argues that the value of 'secular Anglicanism' can be seen in the fact that

> "it shows toleration and resilience verging on complacency; it is the expression of British adaptability and pragmatism. Though under threat from some of the growing divisions in society, it succeeded in carrying the country through the disruptions of the 1960s and the more recent (sic) "winters of discontent" without fatal damage to the fundamentally humane tradition of public life"[320]

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[313] Edwards, David 'Then and Now' in Marjorie Reeves (ed.) Christian Thinking and Social Order – Conviction Politics from the 1930's to the Present Day. (Cassell, London and New York), 1999,179 – 183, 182

[314] Henceforth BSR

[315] *Not Just for the Poor: Christian Perspectives on the Welfare State,* report of the Social Policy Committee of the Board for Social Responsibility, (Church House Publishing, 1986)

[316] *Not Just for the Poor*, 118: 7.3

[317] see Medhurst and Moyser, *Church and Politics in a Secular Age,* 48, for further description of secular Anglicanism

[318] Medhurst and Moyser, *Church and Politics in a Secular Age,* 7

[319] Clark, *The Church Under Thatcher*, 80

[320] John Habgood, *Church and Nation in a Secular Age,* (Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1983), 45

The question for the Church must therefore be to what extent this tendency relates to the thought world of the Church itself and its leaders and or to more general English cultural attitudes, which the Church had come to represent. It is not possible here to supply an in depth study of the level of interaction between secular Anglicanism and the decision makers within the Church of England, but the very desire of the Church to claim some form of ownership of this tradition and to harness it as a justification for Church involvement in social issues is significant, not least because during this period Margaret Thatcher made clear her intentions to ground her politics in Christian faith,[321] an understanding of Christian faith however which was fundamentally at odds with the Anglican Social Tradition. It must be noted that this attitude to faith and belief may well have been grounded in her non-conformist background, although the full implications of this must be the subject of another study. Before moving on to an assessment of the political situation of the time and the philosophy of the New Right which underpinned both the political ideology and understanding of Christian faith of Thatcherism there are however a number of issues relating to the social situation in general which must be dealt with.

There are many and complex reasons for the above mentioned social trends. There is however one which deserves particular attention and which can be singled out as the major difference in between the social context of studies in the 1940's and those undertaken forty years later, namely the role of the media and in particular of the small screen. This at least is the argument put forward by Davie[322] who was herself an influential advisor to the ACUPA[323]. She cites the work of Knott in support of her hypothesis that not only does the media play a significant role in late modern society, but it is hugely influential in the realms of both institutional and popular religion and far from simply portraying the ongoing religious situation is responsible for shaping it.[324]

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[321] Forrester, *Christianity and the Future of Welfare,* 66
[322] Davie in Geoffrey Ahern, and Grace Davie, *Inner City God: The nature of belief in the inner city,* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1987), 40
[323] Davie in Ahern and Davie *Inner City God,* 23
[324] Davie in Ahern and Davie *Inner City God,* 40

The situation sketched above offers a general outline of the place of the Church in society. It is however important, before proceeding to an analysis of FITC itself, to address the various ideological critiques levelled at the welfare state and the structure of society in general, which had shaped the thought world out of which the report came and to which it was addressed. *Not Just For The Poor*, published only a year after FITC itself, identifies four influential stances[325] which together form the climate in which FITC was written and published.

Although the Feminist critique was not new to this era, issues of gender and equality were becoming increasingly prominent in an age where growing numbers of women were in employment and in some areas, particularly those where traditional industries were disappearing such as the North East as coalmines shut, were the sole breadwinner in a family. This reversal of roles had an impact on many areas of society and not least the welfare arena. The traditional welfare state, formed in the 1940s assumed traditional gender roles and legislated accordingly. The feminist critique challenged this attitude. Furthermore the welfare policies of the time ascribed care roles to the family with, the feminists argue, the unwritten understanding that women would take on such roles. The feminist critique therefore had a significant impact, not just because it challenged traditional gender roles, but because in raising questions of equality and justice it opened the way for other minority groups, particularly ethnic minorities, to challenge the status quo. This critique raised questions which went right to the heart of the welfare system as it stood and raised questions for the Church too in terms of its theology of the family, the position of women and the treatment of minorities both within the Church and in terms of welfare policy. This first critique raised questions therefore of justice in terms of the treatment of individuals. The second questioned the structures, not just in their composition, but in their very existence

[325] *Not Just for the Poor*, 83 - 96

The Marxist critique had had an impact at both a political and a theological level. The dissemination of Liberation theology during the previous decade meant that the Church was, in a very specific context, conversant with the ideology and terminology of Marxism. In broader terms the Marxist critique is responsible for highlighting the limits both of a welfare state and of policies of revolution rather than reform in general. It questioned the dominance of capitalism and therefore required defenders of the status quo to justify their position at a very basic level. The Church therefore learnt from this that there were alternatives to the reformist position traditionally taken and that the structures of power and authority must at the very least be questioned, if not dismantled, if was to continue to maintain a prophetic stance.

The third critique is more difficult to define than the previous two. *Not Just For The Poor* settled on the title the 'Local participatory approach'. By this they meant the critique which emphasises the importance of the local, participatory dimension in welfare and consequently criticised the emphasis on professionalisation of the welfare system, which supporters of this position argue, creates a 'top-down' attitude to welfare, where those on the receiving end become 'clients' distanced from the decision making process which makes decisions on their behalf. The influence of this stance on the welfare debate has raised questions as to the optimum levels of professional and indeed state involvement in welfare provision. The Church however builds on this basic premise by beginning to question the place of individuals in the welfare systems which control their lives and turning attention to issues of human worth, dignity and the importance of community.

Political Situation

Finally we must consider perhaps the most influential ideology of this period. Namely the philosophy of the 'New Right'. Those who espoused this approach had been influenced by the thought of those such as Friedman, Hayek and Nozick. Central to this philosophy is a belief in the individual. Everyone, the New Right would argue, should be free to make their own destiny and control all aspects of their lives. They should therefore not be constrained by

obligations to others through high levels of taxation. Charity should, in other words, be optional and the state should in all things internal maintain a laissez-faire attitude. To maintain a strong welfare state is, by this reckoning, therefore irresponsible as not only does it place limits on individual freedom, but also risks creating a culture of dependency. This ideology inspired a considerable amount of theological thinking on the themes of community and collective responsibility as a response to its individualistic message, not least when applied directly to the Churches by those such as E. R. Norman advocating a focus on the part of the Church on personal morality and the spiritual growth of the individual. Not that Normans' perspective was the sole application of New Right philosophy to theology. Brian Griffiths, who was head of the policy unit at 10 Downing street during Margaret Thatcher's time as Prime Minister[326] is notable in his detailed theological analysis defending market economies from the New Right perspective[327] and while his theories are only peripheral to this investigation the very fact that such theological thinking was taking place in the corridors of secular power during this period cannot have failed to influence the direction of government policy. The Philosophy of the New Right however also had a significant impact on the politics of the day and it is to this that we first turn.

The philosophy of the New Right, along with the undisputed dominance of enterprise culture and the Free Market were the foundation stones of Thatcherite ideology which dominated politics and the country from 1979 onwards. It is impossible to carry out a full study of Thatcherism here, but neither is it necessary. As far as the role of the Church in the nation in this period is concerned it will suffice to have a clear understanding of the underlying ideology, which can to a large extent be summed up in Margaret Thatcher's now infamous declaration: 'There is no such thing as society; there

[326] Donald A. Hay, 'Introduction: the role of values in a market economy', in Donald A. Hay, and Alan Kreider, (eds.), *Christianity and the Culture of Economics,* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2001), 1-11, 3

[327] see Lord Griffiths of Fforestfach 'The Culture of the Market' in Donald A.Hay, and Alan Kreider, (eds.), *Christianity and the Culture of Economics,* (University of Wales Press, Cardiff, 2001), 12-32

are individual men and women and there are families',[328] all in her view supported by the 'invisible hand' of the Market. At this stage it is however important to note with Roberts that

> "There are therefore paradoxical points of connection between religion and the 'enterprise culture', given that the latter ultimately functioned as a sugared coating for what was to prove to be the invasive managerialism that Thatcherism in its rountinised form was to become. In effect, both Thatcherism and the enterprise culture were ethically under committed, yet, given British constitutional arrangements, they were over empowered."[329]

And it was in this political environment that the Church sought to play a role. As Roberts comments

> "An ever- extending disciplinary regime for the many and self-realisation for the few confronted traditional churches in a post-traditional society that were, and remain, rhetorically over committed, but simultaneously drained of effective social influence and thus often unable to deliver."[330]

The loss of influence by the Churches from the 1950's onwards cannot, Forrester argues be attributed to any one of the factors considered, but is nonetheless a fact to the extent that the Church no longer has direct access to the 'corridors of power' but has to earn the right to be heard by the relevance and intellectual weight of her arguments.[331] How this was undertaken is the subject of the following section.

Church Structures

The way that the bishops decided to act was, even on the surface, a typically Anglican pragmatic stance in setting up a commission to research the facts before making public statements, but it becomes even more revealing as

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[328] Richard H. Roberts, *Religion, Theology and the Human Sciences,* (CUP, Cambridge, 2002), 49

[329] Roberts, Religion, Theology and the Human Sciences, 49

[330] Roberts, Religion, Theology and the Human Sciences, 49

[331] Forrester, *Christianity and the Future of Welfare*, 64

regards traditions of Anglican Christian Social Thought if explored in more detail. The Anglican social tradition is, as we have seen in the work of Jenkins and Temple, not afraid to make controversial and dramatic statements, but is certainly reformist not revolutionary and in this way content to work within the established structures of the Church. FITC is no exception. FITC was, as mentioned earlier, the product of a committee and this committee in turn was answerable to the hierarchy of the Church in a formalised manner. More specifically the report was written to be presented to the General Synod of the Church of England and, as with all such reports, only once its recommendations had been approved by this body could the report be cited as official Church policy. While this is no place for a full history of the Church of England it is pertinent to note here that the General Synod with its three houses of Bishops, Clergy and Laity and one member one vote system represents a significant step forward in the devolution of power from the bishops (and to some extent clergy in general) to lay people in the Church. While the Church had had a General Assembly from the 1920's onwards, it was not until the formation of the General Synod in 1970 that power shifted significantly from the ancient convocations of York and Canterbury to include the laity. Given that FITC was originally written to be presented to this body, it must therefore be remembered that both content and language will have been constructed by the commission with this in mind. Clark maintains that all reports intended for General Synod are 'couched in terms of cautious moderation'[332]. And it is certainly true that the broad composition of the Synod is more closely related to, thought not synonymous with by any means, the mind of the people in the pews than the Episcopal intellectual elite can be said to be.

While this must be taken into consideration however, it must also be remembered that FITC was not written by a representative cross section of General Synod (whatever that may be!) but by a commission specially selected for the purpose and while General Synod may have been free to reject their recommendations there is a tradition of committee work in the Anglican Church, closely related to the tradition of social thought and grounded in the

[332] Clark, *The Church Under Thatcher*, 74

Anglican notion of the value of reason and the use of expertise where it exists, which is, it could be argued, a not insignificant factor in the acceptance of well researched and justified, if potentially controversial reports by General Synod. Clark, interestingly for this study, traces this type of committee activity as a feature of the Anglican system back to Temple. The emphasis on technical expertise as a non-negotiable factor in any respectable study of social factors, is Clark maintains, directly attributable to the administrative expertise of Temple and his method of working while bishop and later Archbishop,[333] while the influence of Temple's own belief in the value of working with a wide variety of people and ideas, facilitated by his ability to draw together diverse ideas into a coherent whole, is to be seen in the diversity of opinions often evident in the composition of committees and study groups of the Board of Social Responsibility.[334]

Bishop John Gladwin, who was General Secretary to the BSR for a period from 1982 and therefore advisor to ACUPA is evidence of the continuation of belief in this tradition amongst the leaders of the Church when he argues that the development of expertise on the part of theologians is not intended to create an elite, but rather to allow the Church to speak with clarity on social issues.[335] Medhurst and Moyser also provide support for the argument that the Church, in terms of its self perception, remains firmly within the tradition of the formation of Anglican Christian Social Thought as pioneered by Temple in the work of the BSR and consequently related reports, as they argue that debates in General Synod which flow from its publications are intended not only to educate the members of that institution, but 'are also ultimately intended to affect public and hence governmental attitudes.'[336]

In summary, the intentions when producing a report of General Synod are, as has been shown, multiple but result not infrequently in a finished publication 'diluted' in order to be comprehensible and palatable to the lay membership of General Synod. This said it must be mentioned that FITC was a notable

[333] Clark, *The Church Under Thatcher*, 73
[334] Clark, *The Church Under Thatcher*, 73
[335] John Gladwin, *Love and Liberty,* (DLT, London, 1998), 144
[336] Medhurst and Moyser, *Church and Politics in a Secular Age,* 332

exception to this pattern according to Medhurst and Moyser partly because here the Church took a more independent role in stating its own position and partly because it took on the role of political opposition[337]. At a basic level this can be said to be the case given our conclusions so far, however it is also possible to give a more detailed explanation of the widespread impact of the report and the reasons for its location in the tradition of Anglican Christian Social Thought which we are seeking to define. This is perhaps best illustrated by use of the five categories, which Richard O'Brien identified as vital for the success of FITC when interviewed by Clark[338]. O'Brien was himself chair of the commission and representative both of its high profile nature and its connections both to Church and Government being both a committed Anglican and experienced in the workings of government [339]. O'Brien's five categories can for our purposes be assessed and elaborated under two headings. Firstly the style and working methods of the Commission and secondly membership and personnel.

The ACUPA was, O'Brien notes, set up along the lines of a Royal Commission, which because of their historical record are respected by the general public and their deliberations taken seriously. On a practical note the ACUPA used official government statistics on which to base their analyses, to avoid a descent into squabbles over figures and accusations of deliberate undermining of the official understanding of the contemporary situation. In addition to this the one survey commissioned independently was carried out by an independent and neutral body [340]. Last, but certainly not least, the members of the Commission undertook a number of visits to innercity areas in order to experience the situation for themselves and meet the people who would be affected by their report. The visits included open public meetings where the members sought to listen to the views of local residents.[341] These visits received a considerable amount of publicity, creating interest in the report in advance of its publication but were also hugely important to the members

[337] Medhurst and Moyser, *Church and Politics in a Secular Age,* 296
[338] Clark, *The Church Under Thatcher*, 80-1
[339] Clark, *The Church Under Thatcher*, 81
[340] (Social Surveys (Gallup Poll) Ltd see *FITC,* iv
[341] *FITC,* iv

themselves on a personal level, changing the thinking of a number and producing a determination to compile a report, which would have a significant impact.

As regards the membership of ACUPA O'Brien highlights the appointment of John Pearson as secretary as a crucial step.[342] Pearson was seconded from the department of the Environment and his knowledge both of UPAs and experience in politics coupled with administrative ability meant that he was not only of practical use to the Commission, but himself embodied the link between State and Church clearly still in existence and could therefore serve to cement in the minds of the public the position of authority from which the Church was speaking. Nor was Pearson the only member of the ACUPA whose presence lent weight to the findings of the report. The report benefited from the knowledge of experts in academia and politics both in the secular and ecclesiastical spheres. The Bishop of Liverpool, David Sheppard, for example, was both Church leader and author and worked alongside professors in the fields of sociology and economics, as well as laity and clergy with practical experience of life in UPAs.[343] In addition advisors to the Commission from such bodies as The William Temple Foundation (John Atherton), Christian Action (Eric James) and BSR (John Gladwin) and academics who undertook research or prepared context papers such as Grace Davie and Hugh McLeod were all well known and respected in their areas of expertise.[344]

The very make up of this body therefore confirms Atherton's assertion that Church of England publications take empirical realities seriously[345] and the fact that this report stands in the tradition of Anglican Christian Social Thought represented by Temple and Jenkins in its reliance on intellectual thought.

Theology of Faith in the City

[342] Clark, *The Church Under Thatcher*, 81
[343] see *FITC*, v-vi for full list
[344] *FITC*, iv - vi
[345] John Atherton, *Christianity and the Market*, (SPCK, London, 1992), 163

In our search for the defining factors in an Anglican tradition of Social Theory it is of paramount importance to study both sociological factors and the underlying doctrine or theology which combined produce the Social Theory. One criticism levelled at FITC after publication was that its theology was limited and weak. This criticism will be focused upon later on, but at present it is essential to examine the theology present in the report, both explicitly in the section 'Theological Priorities'[346] and less explicitly in the body of the report, for, unlike Temple, FITC did not make a clear distinction between principles and policy suggestions confined to an appendix, but focused on practical recommendations at the end of each chapter on specific areas of concern.

Anglican Tradition of Social Thought

No attempt is made to expound the underlying theology in a systematic manner, so it is left to the reader to piece together the Social Theory of the ACUPA. The tone and basic direction of FITC is however to be found in the introduction, albeit in an ambiguous manner. The Church, the authors proclaim,

> "does not have particular competence or a distinguished record in proposing social reforms, but the Church of England has a presence in all the UPAs, and a responsibility to bring their needs to the attention of the nation. If our report has a distinctive stance, it arises from our determination to investigate the urban situation by bringing to bear upon it those basic Christian principles of justice and compassion which we believe we share with the great majority of the people of Britain."[347]

From this paragraph alone we can learn much about the underlying values held by ACUPA. Importance is evidently attached to the physical presence of the Church locally as well as a responsibility, or one could say duty, to the nation as a whole. The Church is in other words duty bound to act at a local level and play a prophetic role at a national level. In addition two basic principles of justice and compassion, once again highlighting the need both for emotional

[346] *FITC*, 47 - 69
[347] *FITC*, xiv

involvement and more detached concern, are identified not only as Christian, but as values shared with the English people. Here we can see, not only that the issues of justice and compassion will act as a motif throughout the report, but also that the sense of duty felt on behalf of the Church is closely connected to an assumption that Christian values, which the Church has taught in the past still form the moral basis of society.

It is however interesting that the Commission chose to make the point that 'the Church does not have particular competence or a distinguished record in proposing social reforms'[348]. This is a strange comment to make particularly in light of later references to the great nineteenth century tradition of social Christianity[349] and the huge variety of competence in this field represented by the commission members themselves. It would seem to many that they stand within the 'distinguished line of Anglican Theologians',[350] to which they refer as having its roots in the nineteenth century and that this tradition represents both competence and noteworthy action as regards proposing social reforms. Perhaps therefore it is in the interests of pragmatism that they make this claim for they continue

> "but most of us still feel a lack of confidence in these grey areas. We have little tradition of initiating conflict and coping with it creatively. We are not at home in the tough, secular milieu of social and political activism"[351]

This picture could be borne out by Medhurst and Moyser's assessment of the politically conservative average member of the Church of England, but is perhaps less representative of the ACUPA itself as can be seen by its ideology and recommendations set out elsewhere. Here we see a glimpse of the audience for which the report was written, a subject we will return to in discussion of the reaction to and impact of the report. Atherton in fact notes that the idea of the common good runs through the whole report and sees it as a fundamental principle underlying the social thought. For Atherton reference to the common

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348 *FITC*, xiv
349 *FITC*, 56:3.18
350 *FITC*, 49:3.7
351 *FITC*, 49:3.7

good is to a Christian concern for the whole of society, in terms of both people and structures. Its emphasis within FITC is therefore, as he sees it, a direct refutation of the 'privatizing' of religion prevalent at the time and evident both in the obsession of the Church with attendance statistics as well as the growth of enthusiasm for religion focused on individual morality and spirituality.[352] If Atherton is correct this could be one explanation for the highlighting by the authors of the report of the lack of activism in the Church. Certainly they are careful in the report to make an explicit connection between a Christian commitment to social justice and opposition to those destructive trends in society frequently cited by the New Right as highlighting the necessity to return to a Christian society bolstered by a Church preaching individual spirituality. FITC writes in this context that

> "Ultimately it is only an absolute commitment to our solidarity one with another, a recognition of the importance of all forms of collective action for the common good, and a passionate concern for the rights and well-being of those least able to help themselves, which can redress the excessive individualism which has crept into both public and private life today."[353]

> "We believe that at present too much emphasis is being given to individualism, and not enough to collective obligation. In the absence of a spirit of collective obligation, or the political will to foster it, there is no guarantee that the pursuit of innumerable individual self-interests will add up to an improvement in the common good."[354]

The notion of the common good is also, Atherton comments, a constant reminder that the Church exists for non-members[355] or in this context for the entire nation and this too is a recurring theme throughout the report both in terms of the historic resource which the parish system represents and particularly in terms of the sense of duty the Church has. One particularly good example of this can be seen in the pronouncement of FITC on the subject of unemployment. The Church, they say, cannot 'solve' the problem of unemployment with neither the 'mandate nor the competence to do so.'

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[352] John Atherton, *Faith in the Nation,* (SPCK, London, 1988), 33
[353] *FITC,* 56:3.17
[354] *FITC,* 208:9.46
[355] Atherton, *Faith in the Nation*, 33

> "Yet as it is in the position of being the national Church, it has a particular duty to act as the conscience of the nation. It must question all economic philosophies...which perpetuate [the] human misery and despair ... The situation requires the Church to question from its own particular standpoint the morality of these economic philosophies."[356]

Here we receive some indication, not only of the fact that the ACUPA believe that the Church has a duty to act, but also of the forms which they envisage this action taking. The Church is not, they argue, to provide solutions but exists to question those with power on the moral justification or lack of it, for their policies. However political action is, they believe, not sufficient and the human factor must be taken seriously. In other words the commission wish to see social action by the Church with combines political questioning with personal service and also makes the connection between the two in what they term 'intermediate action' in order to promote community.[357] Social comment and action of this kind, they maintain 'proceeds from a long tradition of Christian social concern.'[358] The commission clearly place themselves firmly within this tradition, shown not least by their eagerness to identify their visits to the UPAs, and the response this elicited from them, with the reactions of nineteenth century Church leaders to deprivation [359].

Following this initial sketch of the values underlying the FITC report it is important to proceed to a more in-depth assessment of the themes which characterise the social theory of FITC. Eight themes have been identified, which between them provide an accurate representation of the tone of the report.

Prophetic action

FITC is, as we have already noted, keen to emphasise the duty of the Church to ask awkward questions of those in power. It is however noteworthy, in line

[356] *FITC*, 208:9.41
[357] *FITC*, 57:3.19
[358] *FITC*, 57:3.19
[359] *FITC*, 56:3.18

with criticisms that the report lacks theological depth that little attempt is made to link the duty of the Church to question with the biblical notion of prophecy. In fact the report only mentions this tradition once, referring to 'the prophetic call for justice, with its concern for the rights of the weak and the poor'[360]. A link is made between the challenge posed by this tradition to unprincipled wealth creation and the need today to question economic policy, but it is left to the reader to make the connection between the prophetic tradition and the requirement of the Church to question and/or raise the alarm, which is implied. For in response to a rhetorical question posed in a following paragraph as to how the Church and nation can come to the aid of the poor and marginalised, the commission proclaims 'it is a clear duty for the Church to sound a warning that our society may be losing the 'compassionate' character which is still desired by the majority of its members.'[361] This is apparently though where Christian duty stops short in this respect. There is FITC notes 'ample precedent in the Christian tradition for exposing the system we have to moral judgement', but it cannot be expected to suggest an alternative to the entire economic system.[362]

This statement serves a dual purpose in drawing attention to the priorities of the group quite apart from reinforcing the requirement on the part of the Church to question. Firstly it defines the limits that the group believes exist for Christian involvement yet secondly makes clear the firm belief of the commission that Christian involvement in welfare involves critical engagement with the economic structures and systems of the nation and not merely the direct provision of care at either a local or national level.

Wealth creation and Just distribution

In particular the report wishes to challenge the maxim, which is seen as self evident by a significant proportion of society, that the creation of wealth must naturally be the first priority of national policy and that the benefits of

[360] *FITC*, 52:3.13
[361] *FITC*, 56-7:3.18
[362] *FITC*, 55:3.16

economic growth will 'trickle down' to those less well off.[363] The commission document their own astonishment that even amongst the unemployed of many UPAs there is a widespread feeling that 'nothing can be done'.[364] The Church then, FITC argues, must question all economic policies[365]. Interestingly however the report stops short of recommending a complete rejection of the system as it stands. The creation of wealth can, they argue, be defended as the foundation of a system for any industrialised country, but must be tempered by an insistence upon just distribution.[366] FITC even defends the 'pursuit of efficiency in industry' from the biblical perspective of 'stewardship of resources'

> "providing, that is, such a pursuit does not become a short-sighted and selfish exploration of human and material resources, and that ..., it is accompanied by the fair distribution of the wealth created."[367]

This document then, as Atherton has remarked, accepted the necessity of the market economy[368]and thereby highlights the reforming rather than revolutionary nature of the Anglican social response. For Atherton this position on economic issues is closely connected with the social and theological framework of the common good and interdependence in which the Anglican response to the market is grounded. Strong reactions to the excesses of the free market and their social impact in the light of this have meant, Atherton maintains, that the Church has failed to learn basic economic lessons and so has concentrated on the issue of distribution without really engaging with the underlying issue of the necessity of the market.[369] Atherton himself, it must be remembered, would advocate a more radical position so he is not writing from a neutral standpoint, but what he says is of interest here, not just as an explanation of the position of FITC with regard to the free market, but because of the light it sheds on the Anglican social position as expounded in FITC in

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[363] *FITC,* 55:3.13
[364] *FITC,* 207:9.40
[365] *FITC,* 208:9.41
[366] *FITC,* 204:9.28
[367] *FITC,* 55:3.16
[368] Atherton, *Christianity and the Market,* 162
[369] Atherton, *Christianity and the Market,* 162

general. The acceptance of the market has, Atherton argues, led to the development of two lines of thought. Firstly the commitment to a major role for the state, particularly in terms of welfare provision, in managing the market economy and secondly an almost intrinsic sympathy for socialist strategies in contrast to a condemnation of the policies of the New Right.[370] This coherent approach to gradual change has then had a significant impact on mainstream Churches partly, Atherton argues, because of the 'commitment of the tradition to the positive function of the Church in modern society'.[371]

In other words the acceptance of the market economy by FITC can be seen as an indicator both of the establishment position of the Church and its wish to play a leadership role in society. There are many who criticise the conciliatory stance which this represents, as will be demonstrated later, but in terms of Anglican Christian Social Theory we can see the logic of such a position as the Church prioritises the chance to influence social policy over radical pronouncements. Harvey, for example notes how, though the commission included amongst its members and consultants those who espoused a radical line of thought (not least Atherton) and believed that the report should express this, this was opposed from inside the commission on pragmatic grounds. Their priority was to present Church and State with practical recommendations which could change the lives of those in UPAs.

> "Presenting a radically alternative vision of society, however theologically correct, would have ensured that the report would have no practical effect, at least in the short term. The urgency of the situation, and the amount of confidence placed in the Commission by those who had been visited, made it seem imperative to come up with recommendations that were politically and economically practicable in the immediate future."[372]

Harvey goes on to speculate that Christian principles had perhaps been compromised by humanitarian pragmatism,[373] but in light of the emerging

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[370] Atherton, *Christianity and the Market,* 163
[371] Atherton, *Christianity and the Market,* 163
[372] Anthony Harvey, *By What Authority?,* (SCM Press, London, 2001), 5
[373] Harvey, *By What Authority?,* 5

outline of the principles of Anglican Christian Social Theory it is credible to argue that this was no real compromise of principles, but rather an intrinsic feature of the tradition, grounded in a Church with close links to the establishment, a notion supported by the work of Davey who maintains that the influence of the suburban church, increasingly practising individualistic forms of faith, is considerable and evident not as a distinct group in church politics, but in the failure of the Church to 'take seriously the reality of structural sin and the challenges of social analysis to its own corporate life.'[374]. This is not to say that FITC did not grapple with these issues, but that the vocal advocates of a more individualistic faith cannot be ignored when influences on the social theory of the Church are considered.

In response to this individualistic expression of Christianity FITC had to formulate a theology which could explain the active presence of the Church in the material as well as the spiritual and the understanding of individual spirituality in Anglican Christian Social Thought.

Stewardship

FITC is quick to denounce any conception of a 'private' religion with no political implications as a relatively modern idea and therefore disconnected from the traditions of early Christianity. In fact, they argue, the separation of religious faith from everyday life requires a dualistic view of the human person[375] and such a belief has been shown to be obsolete by the observations of social science, which show that any study of the human person is incomplete without the inclusion of cultural, linguistic and social factors in the equation.[376] In the same way FITC argues that missionaries working with the starving and marginalised cannot divorce ministry to the 'soul' from concern for material needs[377] so a Christian gospel addressed to those in the UPAs must, address the individual in terms of the material as well as the spiritual. But simultaneously

[374] Andrew Davey, Urban Christianity and Global Order, (SPCK, London, 2001), 91
[375] *FITC,* 50:3.8
[376] *FITC,* 50:3.9
[377] *FITC,* 51:3.10

> "the Church has to be ready to challenge any understanding of community that neglects the needs of its weaker members, which is concerned with individual's rights and material possessions at the expense of the common good."[378]

The material is, in other words, secondary to the spiritual, but yet is a legitimate concern for Christian witness. For the Commission argues

> "such is the incarnational or 'embodied' character of our religion that we cannot seriously envisage a Christian concern which leaves out of account the physical and social conditions under which people actually live."[379]

The fundamental Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, leads, they believe to the conclusion that Christianity is a 'materialistic' religion. So

> "even if material values must always be subordinate, salvation involves, not indifference to, but a proper stewardship of, material things."[380]

The choice of the term stewardship is interesting, particularly today when it is frequently associated with environmental theologies. In the context in which FITC was written however stewardship was a concept with which Anglican congregations were well acquainted in the context of financial giving as the Church mounted stewardship campaigns. In the light of this it is not surprising that FITC chose the take the terminology and broaden the way in which it was understood.

Whatever the terminology used however it is clear that an understanding of the firm belief in the duty of the Church to address both material and spiritual needs is fundamental to an understanding of Anglican Christian Social Thought as it is expressed in FITC. Not only is it a concept central to the dual method of pastoral and prophetic ministry, but in its reliance on an incarnational understanding of

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[378] *FITC*, 59:3.22
[379] *FITC*, 68:342 (2)
[380] *FITC*, 70:3.45

salvation it is one area where the theological assumptions underlying FITC come to the surface.

Theology of Work

This said FITC is also keen to point out that there is more to the fight for social justice than the provision of material resources and this is particularly well illustrated by reference to unemployment. The commission agrees with Temple who asserted that unemployment is 'the most hideous of our social evils'[381] not just because of the hardship that the lack of income creates, but because the failure to obtain regular paid work erodes self respect and dignity[382]. Further more the Commission argues

> "Poverty may greatly diminish human dignity; but dignity is not necessarily restored by the promotion of material standards and values."[383]

So what is needed is a theology of work, a challenge to the attitudes prevalent in society that social status is connected to employment and a campaign not just for an increase in available employment and the just distribution of that which exists, but for a real change in attitudes

> "Individuals must be judged not by their ability to find gainful employment ... but by what they are in themselves and by the contribution they can make to the common good."[384]

Here we see an integral part of the social thought of the report drawn out. Once again reference to the common good asserts the value of community, but within that community the commission wishes to assert that individuals have value and that that value is unconditional. The Church then has a role in a society where the gap between rich and poor is growing[385] in working to restore the dignity of those who find themselves outside the system and

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[381] *FITC*, 207:9.38
[382] *FITC*, 207:9.38
[383] *FITC*, 62:3.29
[384] *FITC*, 54:3.17
[385] *FITC*, 205:3.99

powerless. In the words of Ford and McFayden, writing in *'God in the City'* a reader produced by the Archbishop of Canterbury's Urban Theology Group, which was one product of FITC, the Church as envisaged by the authors of FITC should be concerned with

> "the maintenance of hope in the possibilities of human transformation, and of a theological realism about the strength of the powers which oppose the quest for justice and quality of life."[386]

Community

The everyday realities of people's lives both spiritual and material are, we have established, central to any social theory espoused by the Commission. As their focus on the common good has shown however, the well-being of individuals must be addressed within a wider framework. In the words of FITC

> "Although it is with people that policy must be concerned, there does need to be a dimension to action that recognizes that places are important too. The concept of neighbourhood is about both people and places."[387]

It is unsurprising that the Commission chooses to focus on neighbourhoods given the parochical nature of the Church of England. As early as the introduction to FITC the authors highlight the fact that the Church of England has 'a presence' in all UPAs[388]. Ten years on the authors of *God in the City* were still affirming that the place based nature of the Church is one of its strengths[389]. In addition, not only is the Church present in the UPAs, it is FITC claims virtually unique in the nature of its presence. As Davie writes, whose evidence to the ACUPA formed the empirical basis for their assertions on this matter, unlike other professionals involved in the inner cities the clergy live in the area and therefore do not leave at the end of the working day,[390] while, as

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[386] Sedgwick, (ed.) God in the City: Essays and Reflections from the Archbishop's Urban Theology Group, 137
[387] *FITC,* 176:8.30
[388] *FITC,* xiv
[389] Sedgwick,(ed.) God in the City, 133
[390] Davie in Ahern and Davie, *Inner City God,* 63

the report notes, in some neighbourhoods the resources of the Church in terms of premises and equipment as well as personnel are the only ones based locally.[391] This by no means means however that the Commission has only praise for the Church and the parochial system. The system is, they believe, in need of reform[392] not least because as neighbourhood involves both people and places a commitment to a neighbourhood must include a commitment not just to physical presence in the place, but also to the community that makes up the human dimension of the neighbourhood and here we reach one of the themes underlying both the social theory and majority of practical recommendations of the report. A Christian community consists, ACUPA believes of three defining features, first laid out by St Paul. Firstly it is essentially local, focused on a place and group of people who meet regularly. Secondly it respects the integrity of every individual within it and every individual who makes up the community is seen as having unique value. Thirdly Christian community should be outward looking, seeking to serve the needs of others outside the community and belong to a wider community.[393]

> " A Christian community is one that is open to, and responsible for, the whole of the society in which it is set, and proclaims its care for the weak, its solidarity with all, and its values which lie beyond the mere satisfaction of material needs."[394]

So the concept of community challenges the Church on three levels. Firstly to reform the Church both nationally and locally so that it reflects this ideal of Christian community and is therefore able to use its parish system to support those in the locality who may not attend Church, but who could benefit from its support [395], secondly to promote community at all levels of society [396] and thirdly to use this concept of community to 'support and challenge the principles which govern community work in Britain today'[397].

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[391] *FITC*, 225:9.112
[392] *FITC*, 93:5.42
[393] *FITC*, 58:3.21
[394] *FITC*, 59:3.22
[395] *FITC*, 59:3.23
[396] *FITC*, 57:3.18
[397] *FITC*, 58:3.22

This understanding of the nature of community is integral to the social theory of the Church as portrayed by FITC because while grounded in theology it can lead directly to a blueprint for social action. In this way it is also a perfect illustration of the methodology central to Anglican Christian Social Theory. In light of the Christian understanding of community outlined FITC asks local churches to consider 'four interlocking levels of response' to the situation in their local community, which could also be translated into a plan for national Church policy. These four levels are as follows: i) A wide concern for the Needs of our Society, ii) A Close Experience and Involvement in the Locality iii) Pastoral Support and iv) The Provision of Services.[398] Stopping short of detailed policy recommendations these recommendations consider the practical application of Christian principles at the levels of intellectual awareness and physical involvement. In the language of the report this is what is termed 'Intermediate Action' defined as

> "forms of action and service which are intermediate between personal ministry to individuals and political action directed towards society as a whole."[399]

These are forms of actions which are emphasised in the report and advocated as an important and valuable Christian response to social injustice. In this way the Church can, according to the ACUPA, serve the neighbourhood

> "in the light of its own inherited understanding of a God-given 'community', and its own vision of the ultimate realization of God's Kingdom in a form of human society."[400]

Here FITC does not spell out whether the realization of the kingdom is envisaged as existing in the community of the Church or society as a whole. *Not Just For the Poor* is much more explicit arguing that the Kingdom of God is not restricted to the Church but rather that the Church should bear witness to

[398] *FITC*, 278-9: 12.20
[399] *FITC*, 57:3.19
[400] *FITC*, 59:3.23

the Kingdom in the area of welfare provision.[401] Certainly as we have seen FITC believes in an inclusive Church. The question is whether the Church can live up to this ideal.

Reappraisal of the Church

It is clear, the ACUPA believes, that the Church of England has to reassess its position own internal structures if it is to witness effectively in the modern world and adequately respond to the practical challenges of a Christian social theory.

ACUPA wished to challenge the assumption that traditional methods of Church teaching and organisation would be sufficient to maintain the position of the Church at the end of the twentieth century. They argue instead for a Church, which endeavours to be local, outward-looking, participating and ecumenical.[402] It should in other words restructure and prioritise in order to transform the historic Church into a modern witness to communities.

The Church may have received a positive legacy it its parish system and therefore local presence in the country, but has also carried into the twentieth century a 'clerical paternalistic legacy', the result of a middleclass, clergy dominated structure.[403] Secular perceptions of class and power still persist in the Church[404], they claim and so the Church must urgently reform its own structures, in addition to advocating change in the country and this internal reform must therefore be informed by the principles of social thought underlying all of the work of the Church.

There are two levels at which this reform is necessary. The practical level, altering the perception the Church has of the manner in which pastoral work

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[401] *Not Just for the Poor: Christian Perspectives on the Welfare State,* report of the Social Policy Committee of the Board for Social Responsibility, (Church House Publishing, 1986), 30: 2.47

[402] *FITC,* 74: 4.6

[403] *FITC,* 31:2.18

[404] *FITC,* 101:5.82

should be carried out and the abstract, reforming the assumptions surrounding academic theology.

One key element is to challenge the supremacy of clerical power, in order to create a Church of a less paternalistic nature. In order to avoid a rift between the social action undertaken by clergy and a congregation dependant on them it is vital, the Commission maintains, to train lay people as these people are then not only empowered to act themselves, but will have the skills to enable them to support others active in the community. FITC is however also keen to assert the symbolic role which they believe is played by the clergy who, for many in their neighbourhood serve as an embodiment of the Church. FITC uses this argument to press for the development of Local Non-Stipendiary Ministry, which once again highlights the emphasis put by the commission on action at a local level, but it is of particular interest here as an example of the extent to which the Commission wished to hold on to traditional patterns of ministry and therefore hierarchies because of the power associated with them historically. It is clearly reform and not revolution that is on the agenda of the Church.

In addition to reform in terms of personnel the report recommended significant re-allocations of the resources of the Church. This may seem at first glance to be a topic of purely practical implications and therefore out of place in a discussion of social theory, but the principles which undergird the proposal are illuminating as regards the expectation of the ACUPA in terms of the impact of their vision and social theory on the Church at large.

The report calls for a more 'equitable' distribution of the historic resources of the Church[405] and for partnership in the body of the Church as regards the sharing of resources to encourage both equality and efficiency[406] and in addition the Commission recommends that the Church Commissioners should not look for financial return from rented property to avoid conflict with issues of social responsibility[407]. In other words the Commission used practical

[405] *FITC*, 161:7.85
[406] *FITC*, 155:7.60
[407] *FITC*, 261:10.116

financial recommendations to illustrate the values of justice and the common good which they felt were paramount. The report also advocated the establishment of a Church Urban Fund[408]. The aim of this fund would ostensibly be to strengthen the presence of the Church in UPAs and to promote its witness[409]. It is however evident that the authors of FITC saw the establishment of the CUF as a way of enabling members of the wider Church with limited experience of life in UPAs, to make a positive contribution to the changes in the inner cities. This too however critics have taken as a sign of the cautious tone of the report and of the middleclass nature of the Church in general. As the authors of *God in the City* commented a decade after the publication of the report

> "The opportunity to make some tangible contribution to the difficulties of UPAs was always likely to be more attractive than having to think through the difficult issues of powerlessness and poverty. A monetary contribution is far easier than a change in our views and attitudes towards society."[410]

This is no criticism of the CUF as such, or claim that had the CUF not been formed more structural changes would have been implemented, but rather an observation that the nature of the Church of England means that while a spirit of altruism ensures the continuation of well meant charitable giving changes in attitude and systems are harder to achieve.

Similar issues surround the reform of theology as envisaged by the ACUPA. The Commission questions the supremacy of academic theology in the western tradition which has tended to value deductive and academic thought above other methods. Drawing on the insights of Liberation theology the commission makes the point that

> "for the most part Christian theology has been created by those relatively well provided with leisure and, freedom of action and material well-being"[411]

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[408] Henceforth CUF
[409] *FITC,* 162:7.88
[410] Sedgwick,(ed.) God in the City, 92 5.15
[411] *FITC,* 63:3.32

and as a result has taken little account of the perspectives of the poorest in society. Liberation theology developed a methodology in response to this observation usually entitled 'bias to the poor', concentrating on developing theology from the grass roots level reflecting the priorities of the oppressed and not the oppressors[412]

The influence that this perspective had on the commission is perhaps not surprising when it is realised that a number of those involved had considerable knowledge of the methodology of Liberation theology, not least David Sheppard who had even published a book entitled '*Bias to the Poor*'[413]. There are those who have criticised the report for an over reliance on this perspective, but it is clear that the intention was not to adopt it wholesale, but to use the example of Liberation theology to challenge the established understanding of what theology should be[414]. As Russell, a member of the Commission, commented in a later publication although a new theological method cannot be imported wholesale and has to take into account social and cultural conditions[415], there are lessons to be learnt from Liberation theology

> "One is the imperative of doing theology in the context of our own society – our political and economic changes – and to do it with those people who are the main victims of these changes."[416]

FITC envisages in other words a move towards a more participatory form of theology where areas work on their own theologies guided by the Church. It is interesting to note however that while proposing what at first sight seems a fairly radical move away from academic control of theological thinking the Commission refers to the historical tradition of the formulation of doctrine which has mean that 'Doctrine is formulated not in the abstract, but to settle questions already in dispute'[417], thus claiming historical precedent for their

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[412] *FITC,* 64:3.33
[413] David Sheppard, *Bias to the Poor,* (Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1983)
[414] *FITC,* 64:3.44
[415] *FITC,* 64:3.44
[416] Hilary Russell, *Poverty Close to Home*, (Mowbray, London, 1995), 103
[417] *FITC,* 69:3.44

claims and defines the limits of such theology by asserting that the task of commissions such as theirs is one of 'indicating the scope and the constraints within which such theologies can be explored and tested in the Church of today.'[418] Reform of theology is evidently to be understood as one within boundaries defined by the hierarchy of the Church, but nonetheless there is a clear acceptance in the report of the need for reform in terms of encouraging theological thinking at a local level and thereby challenging also the middleclass nature of the Church with its emphasis on the written word which has inhibited the growth of the Church in working class areas[419]. Theology should in other words, according to the Commission, be undertaken in partnership with the oppressed, should take account of their experiences and be presented in a manner with which they can identify making use of story, both personal and biblical.[420] All of which serves to support the fundamental belief that for the Church to play an effective role in welfare requires 'a motivation – a theology and a spirituality – of 'membership one of another.''

We have already addressed the issue of common concern in terms of community, but a second motif in the social thought of FITC also touches on this, namely partnership.

Partnership

In FITC the theme of partnership is applied at two different levels advocating partnerships between individuals, but also between organisations. Firstly at the level of individuals the language of the report is a direct reflection of the grammar of discourse of Liberation theology. Citing evidence received by the commission from the diocese of Coventry the report emphasises the importance of partnership through the use of explicitly eucharistic language.

> "The themes of Sharing, Collaboration and Partnership have kept recurring in this résumé. This should be no surprise to the Church which has the Holy Communion as its central act of

[418] *FITC*, 69:3.44
[419] *FITC*, 62:3.30
[420] *FITC*, 65:3.36

> worship... it is the whole Church that is the Body of Christ- the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak. Divided - we may all perish. In partnership – we shall grow in grace."[421]

This is, the Commission writes, a call to sacrificial sharing, but it also shows the notion of partnership involving all on equal terms. Partnership is the concept underlying an understanding of community work as *with* rather than *for* people[422] and leads the Commission to advocate continual assessment by those who have made a commitment to an inner city area by moving there to start a church plant or similar ministry in order to make sure that what was intended to develop ministry by local people does not become ministry instead of them.[423] In this way the best forms of local ministry will, FITC argues, participate by '*collaborating* with the best expressions of local life and by *contributing* to the transformation of life'.[424] Secondly at the level of organisations the vision of partnerships advanced in FITC is by no means restricted to those between local community and Church. FITC therefore applauds the moves being made by some public bodies towards 'bottom up' processes which include an element of community consultation[425] and recommends the development of the concept of partnership by central and local government.[426] Partnership is not, in other words an ecclesiastical issue, though grounded in a particular theological perspective, but is rather an issue of just relations and the common good.

As we have seen the concept of partnership at the level of government is envisaged as involving a degree of consultation. The Church too is exhorted by FITC to learn 'the skill of *listening*'[427] both to local people and to other organisations and Churches. The implication is that the Church in the past has, as Forrester has argued, been too certain of its own expertise and objectivity to take the advice of others and in imposing well intentioned schemes in a

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[421] *FITC*, 259:10.108
[422] *FITC*, 284:12.36
[423] *FITC*, 95:5.52
[424] *FITC*, 77:4.20
[425] *FITC*, 186-7:8.75
[426] *FITC*, 187:8.76
[427] *FITC*, 77:4.22

paternalistic manner has made serious errors.[428] In contrast to this image FITC envisages successful welfare schemes of the future involving a co-ordinated approach at a local level with the public, private and voluntary sectors working in partnership.[429] There is a clear role for the Church in welfare provision in the eyes of the ACUPA as there is for government, but the focus must always be local and involve partnerships between the key bodies themselves as well as between them and local people.

Ecumenical and Interfaith co-operation

In the eyes of the ACUPA the concept of partnership also includes a dimension of cooperation between faith communities, an element of the debate which moves discussion beyond issues of welfare provision to considerations of the nature of truth and brings debate full circle as issues of interfaith and ecumenical co-operation raise questions about the role of the established Church in the nation in a plural age. For ACUPA ecumenical work is taken for granted as part of the ministry of the Church. As noted above the Church as envisioned by FITC must be local, outward looking participatory and ecumenical[430] and in many sections of the report the authors talk not of partnership between local people and the Church, but of people and the churches.[431] Theirs is however a particular understanding of ecumenism. The Commission is critical of the preoccupation with issues of doctrinal agreement which have dominated discussions of church unity in the past.[432] The diversity in styles of worship and conduct which has been tolerated throughout church history should, the Commission argues, provide the pattern for toleration of diversity on doctrinal matters where 'unity may be conceived of as an agreement on the limits of diversity'.[433] This said the focus of the report on this issue, as with other themes, is with the practical implications for aspects of social theory. In terms of ecumenical work therefore the concern is not

[428] Duncan B Forrester, 'A Free Society Today?' in Marjorie Reeves (ed.) *Christian Thinking and Social Order – Conviction Politics from the 1930's to the Present Day.* (Cassell, London and New York, 1999), 210 – 220, 214
[429] *FITC,* 188:8.85
[430] *FITC,* 74: 4.6
[431] *FITC,* 188:8.85
[432] *FITC,* 68:3.41
[433] *FITC,* 68:3.41

primarily with issues of truth, but with responses to social injustice. The Commission maintains that no theological argument should be necessary to focus Christian consciences on the poverty in England's cities, though theology can serve a useful purpose in addressing the issue of how poverty and oppression should be tackled.[434] Neither should the question of whether or not the churches should develop a social theory be an issue of debate, the Commission believe, as the incarnational character of Christianity means that

> "we cannot seriously envisage a Christian concern which leaves out of account the physical and social conditions under which people actually live."[435]

So not only is ecumenical cooperation a 'given' in this understanding but so also is the development of a theology of 'community', and a Christian understanding of community 'provides a framework within which to approach our relationship with people of other faiths.'[436] Thus the celebration of diversity developed through ecumenical work and a theology of community based on the common good leads the commission to espouse an open approach to members of other faiths, while taking a cautious stance as regards the official policy of the Church of England on interfaith matters, referring only to a 'growing consensus' towards a non-confrontational approach.[437] It is however clear that the Commission itself goes much further than this arguing that true Christianity can serve the community by helping others to maintain their 'religious and cultural heritage in freedom'.[438] Not only this, but also

> "Our responsibility for the community is one that we also share with other religious bodies. As we seek to exercise it together we grow in mutual understanding and respect; and when people of different faiths find opportunities for practical collaboration and mutual discussion they begin to discover for themselves the riches of our shared humanity and the solidarity created by our common quest for God."[439]

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[434] *FITC*, 68:3.42
[435] *FITC*, 68:3.42(2)
[436] *FITC*, 68:3.42(3)
[437] *FITC*, 60:3.26
[438] *FITC*, 61:3.28
[439] *FITC*, 61:3.28

This is a strikingly open attitude not only as regards an understanding of God, prioritising faith over the expression of that faith within the Christian tradition, but also because it ascribes not just to other denominations, but to other faiths responsibility for the community, which would once have been the sole preserve of the Church, possibly aided by other groups. This serves as an indicator that the Church, or the strand of social thought within the Church represented by FITC at least, no longer sees the Church as the sole foundation for values in society, but as one of a number of faith communities, albeit one with access to the structures of secular power not available to others and with a unique presence in local communities. This does not mean that the commission does not wish to see a continuation of Christian mission. On the contrary they argue that in the face of the drift of popular beliefs away from the faith of the Church an urgent task facing the Church is 'that of nurturing this common belief in God towards an authentic Christian faith.' [440] But this must be tackled in a flexible manner taking account of the nature of English society.

So where William Temple could argue from a basis of a common faith in the nation in expounding his social theory, the authors of FITC had to focus on themes of general concern which could be grounded in a Christian theology, but which would also ring true for those in contemporary society who lack a Christian vocabulary. So FITC argues for a social theory grounded in the 'experience of justice, love and hope in human history, focused most clearly for us in our religious tradition.'[441]

Recommendations

FITC made a series of recommendations to Church and nation building directly on the social theory outlined above having surveyed large amounts of empirical evidence and consulted experts from a wide variety of disciplines as well as residents of a number of UPAs. The detail of these recommendations is of little interest to this study except to note that a number represented direct criticism

[440] *FITC*, 66:3.39
[441] *FITC*, 360:15.9

of government policy, as in their attention to detail in specific areas of policy they mean little to the casual observer nearly twenty years on without in depth study of both the social situation and government policy at the time, which lies outside the remit of this study. What is of greater interest is the very fact that these recommendations formed an integral part of the study and represented a Church policy position on the issue. In this the report moved beyond the concept of 'middle axioms', an idea which was a fundamental pillar of Temple's thought. Medhurst and Moyser suggest that the motivation for this more confrontational style could be ascribed to the social and political situation in English society at the time, prompting the leadership of the Church to make detailed recommendations in order to spark debate and clarify a Christian position on the issues.[442] There is however possibly also an additional element at work here, which our analysis of Anglican Christian Social Theory has brought to light, namely the importance of the established nature of the Church of England as a defining factor in its social thought. The perception that it is the duty of the Church to comment on social matters had not altered in the years from Temple to FITC, but the social situation had and it is therefore likely that the adoption of a more detailed and policy oriented strategy on the part of the Church was a response to a situation where the role of the Church is increasingly less obvious to the majority in society and where a consensus of public opinion based on the values of the Church cannot be assumed. Where Temple could present principles and assume that Christian women and men would apply them in their own lives FITC felt the need to spell out the policy implications of such principles.

This said it is questionable to what extent the Church was itself aware of this reason for its shift in method, or that it had made a shift at all. Russell documents an observation of Plant that the authors of FITC assumed an agreement across society on the need for 'justice' in political policy, where in fact the New Right had abandoned this as a guiding principle[443] and certainly references in the report to the 'compassionate character' of society desired by

[442] Medhurst and Moyser, *Church and Politics in a Secular Age,* 294
[443] Russell, *Poverty Close to Home,* 53

the majority[444] gives that impression. It is, Edwards argues, because of this erosion of consensus since the 1940s that the Church's ability to influence public policy had declined.[445] The question is to what extent the leadership of the Church was aware of this. Harvey has commented that FITC could have had a greater impact if it had separated its appeals to Church and nation from the very beginning prefacing the latter with a discussion of basic moral values and the former with a more detailed theological chapter. As it was, he argues, the result was an inadequate theological exposition.[446] In making this criticism however he fails to take account of a fundamental premise of Anglican Christian Social Thought, namely that it is the established nature of the Church of England which confers upon it the responsibility to speak out on social issues, but that this duty to comment has a theological as well as a sociological motivation and so to remove the theological foundation from any aspect of the report would be nonsensical, as without this the Church has, in its own eyes as well as those of others, no justification for intervention and no area of expertise to contribute to the debate. The fact that the sense of duty felt by individuals and by groups within the Church to the nation has a sociological foundation in the role which the Church has played historically, not infrequently in a rather patrician manner, does not diminish the fact that the more general sense of duty which has found its context in the English national situation has its roots in basic Christian values. It is the continual reinterpretation of these values to contemporary situations which formed Anglican theology and therefore provided the cornerstone of Anglican Christian Social Thought, so while theology may be influenced by contemporary trends as with any other area of intellectual activity its very presence is inherent to social thought.

While it is the content of the report that is of central interest to this study a brief assessment of the reactions to and impact of the report will provide a clearer picture of the social situation to which the report was addressed and throw some light on the actual role of the Church in the nation at the time.

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[444] *FITC*, 360:3.18
[445] Edwards, 'Then and Now',183
[446] Harvey, *By What Authority?*, 4

Reactions and Impact

The report was published on 3 December 1985, although embargoed Government copies had been leaked several days previously. Media coverage was considerable and by 5 December all copies of both the full and abbreviated versions of the report had gone[447] with 50,000 copies sold in total by 1993[448]. Reactions were mixed both inside and outside the Church, but generally the Church took the press coverage as a positive sign for as the authors of *Staying in the City* commented ten years on, it is easy to criticise the press for negative or unfair reporting but at least the issues were talked about 'in pubs, at school gates, in front of the T.V.'[449] This hints, as has been done elsewhere in this study at a significant and influential role for the media in shaping, and not just reporting debate, but so close to the time it is impossible to evaluate this phenomenon objectively. Reference to the important role of the media will therefore be restricted to a small number of issues where the actions of the media directly impact on a particular feature of the response to the report.

One such area is the preference of the media to deal with personalities rather than issues, a phenomenon evident in the press coverage of the ministry of David Jenkins. It is of particular interest here however because although FITC was a report compiled on behalf of the Church a group of clergy and laity, it received much attention because it was a report officially sanctioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury. As Lee and Stanford have noted in their publication '*Believing Bishops'*, bishops receive attention from politicians because of the percentage of the population which they are perceived to represent, despite the decline in the worshipping population in recent years. Attention is granted to the episcopacy by the media however, Lee and Stanford continue, because bishops are seen as being 'above personal interest' in their interventions in public debate.[450] In addition and of most relevance to this study church leaders who are not bishops receive significantly less attention and are frequently cut

[447] Nils Chittenden, 'The 'Faith in the City' report 1985: An overview and assessment of its impact', (MA Dissertation, University of Northumbria at Newcastle, 1999), 76
[448] Clark, *The Church Under Thatcher*, 74
[449] The Bishops' Advisory Group on Urban Priority Areas, *Staying in the City: Faith in the City ten years on,* (Church House Publishing, London, 1995), 73, 3.2
[450] Simon Lee, and Peter Stanford, *Believing Bishops,* (Faber and Faber, London, 1990), 24

out of a photo, if the bishops do not ensure that the individual is photographed between them[451] and Medhurst and Moyser eloquently make the point that one major reason for the impact that reports of the Church can make in the public domain is the influence they have on the bishops who then speak out, not the weight of the reports independently.[452] However as regards FITC it must be noted that in the eyes of the leader writer in The Times at least it was the official nature of the report, not its Episcopal sponsorship which lent it weight.[453]

The question is however to what extent FITC represented the views of the Church rather than simply of the ACUPA.

On a theological level, as has already been mentioned the major and widespread criticism of the report was not of the content of the theology, but rather of the lack of it and criticism here can be taken as an indicator of radical response to the report as theologians of a more conservative disposition would be more inclined to reject the whole concept of a report addressing issues of public policy than criticise the detail of the content.

Atherton is one critic who attributes the theological inadequacy of the report as he sees it, to a weak grasp of theological method and inability to make clear connections between 'analysis and prescriptions'[454] or to 'distinguish between middlerange imperatives for all and policy options for particular political parties.'[455] In other words not only was the theology weak, but the abandonment of the style of social thought propagated by Temple in which clear distinction is made between middle axioms and policy was in Atherton's view a mistake as it gave the impression that there was only one alternative to the current government stance thus appearing both antagonistic towards government and partisan to the political opposition. For Atherton then FITC represents a departure from the radical Christian social tradition, although this

[451] Lee and Stanford, *Believing Bishops,* 24
[452] Medhurst and Moyser, *Church and Politics in a Secular Age,* 333
[453] *A Flawed Faith,* The Times 3/12/85
[454] John Atherton, *Faith in the Nation,* 135
[455] John Atherton, *Faith in the Nation,* 143

observation must be coupled with a note to the effect that Atherton is open in his rejection of the line of thought which has identified Temple as a radical and 'led to the elevation of Temple to a position of unchallenged eminence in British Christian social thought' and therefore to the demotion of more radical Christian challenges to society.[456] In this way we can see that FITC follows in the footsteps of Temple in a line of Anglican Christian Social Thought.

Following this observation it is helpful to mention the comments of some other academic commentators who, like Atherton felt that the report had fallen short in its theological analysis and had therefore failed to provide a real challenge to the power structures both of Church and society. The report lacks, Ford argues, both an explicit ecclesiology and eschatology[457] and therefore does not challenge patterns in the ways in which power is distributed. This is a criticism frequently made by those from a wide variety of theological positions who felt that the ACUPA in attempting to construct a report which could form the basis of a political consensus had in a naïve manner, overemphasised the consensus of values to be found in the nation. In the words of Leech:

> "The authors are very committed to the view that the mass of people, if not the government, share certain assumptions, for example that compassion should be a governing feature of our society... it is not self evident that the values of the gospel are common to society as a whole. Indeed the evidence to the contrary is considerable."[458]

So as Plant comments the focus on social justice as one of the ideological principles of the report 'assumes a degree of consensus about social values which is not available' in a modern western society.[459]

Forrester attributes both this positive image of the consensus in society and the inability of the Church to radically challenge power structures to the roots of

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[456] John Atherton, Christianity and the Market p.135
[457] David F. Ford, 'Faith in the Cities: Corinth and the Modern City' in Colin Gunton and Daniel Hardy, (eds.) *On being Church: essays on the Christian community,* (T&T Clark, London, 1989), 225- 56, 254
[458] Kenneth Leech, *Struggle in Babylon,*(Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1989), 147
[459] Raymond Plant, 'The Church and the Government' in J.C.D. Clark ed. *Ideas and Politics in Modern Britain,* (Macmillan, London, 1990),116 – 129, 124

the tradition in the historical link between Church and State. The fact that the tradition was pioneered by establishment figures with considerable influence on society has resulted in a 'rather patrician approach to welfare' and difficulties for the elite of the Church 'to envisage or advocate radically changed power relationships.'[460] In other words the position of the Church as part of the establishment has an effect both on the content of her social thought and on her perception of how it will be received by the population at large and by those in power. We will proceed shortly to a consideration of the political response to the report. However it must first be noted in defence of the ACUPA that while it may be true that their theology was weak there was at least a degree of intention behind this as, as Harvey has highlighted, the theological section set out not to construct an 'urban theology' to be applied everywhere, but rather to make room for 'local theologies' and seek to confer a degree of legitimacy on such projects,[461] a perspective which challenges to a degree the accusation that Anglican Christian Social Theory has retained a paternalistic character.

The above has considered the academic response to the theological content of FITC in order to have a clear picture of the social theory as a whole. However it will be necessary to consider the reactions of politicians and above all government to the report, which will give an indication of the role of the Church in the nation, not the role that the ACUPA hoped that it had, which we have seen in the report itself.

The response of government to FITC was in the words of Plant 'unsubtle'[462] and certainly from the day of publication it provoked angry comments ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous. One Conservative MP remarked that FITC was 'out of date, out of time, out of touch and unwanted'[463] while another chose to see the report as proof that the Church was led by 'a load of Communist Clerics'[464] As Sykes has however pointed out the fact that FITC

[460] Forrester, 'A Free Society Today?', 214
[461] Harvey, *By What Authority?*, 5
[462] Plant, 'The Church and the Government', 118
[463] Peter Brunivels MP quoted in [463] Chittenden, 'The 'Faith in the City' report 1985', 77
[464] *Proposals likely to be ignored,* The Times 2/12/85

was clear in its rejection of the feasibility of a wholesale adoption of Liberation theology in British society serves to show that attempts of Conservatives to discredit it because of its 'Marxist' approach 'was as spectacularly wide of the mark as it was helpful to its circulation'.[465] The Government was forced therefore partly as a result of those in its own party boosting publicity given to the report and partly by the ammunition that it had given to the opposition parties to pay some attention to the report.[466] During questions in the House of Commons the Environment Secretary, Kenneth Baker, stated that he would gladly meet the Archbishop to discuss the inner cities,[467] which the Church could interpret as a positive sign, the question remained however as to what extent the government would engage with the recommendations of the report. As Clark has commented and the debate created by the report illustrates the Church of England was able to influence the formation of opinion at a general level, but the Church no longer had direct access to the leaders of the country as it had once had[468] hence the positive signal sent by Baker in agreeing to consult the Archbishop where once such consultation would have been commonplace.

The report did succeed in grabbing the attention of government and of bringing religious debate in to the public domain not however in a manner that showed Church and State to be working from the same principles. The report is often seen as a catalyst for the conflict between Church and government which then became a feature of the later half of the decade symbolised perhaps best by the Prime Minister's now infamous 'Sermon on the Mound' given to the Synod of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh in 1988 summing up her opposition to the social witness of the Church and her dislike of the bishops who made the headlines by directly opposing the political ideology of the time.[469] Interestingly enough however, while opposing the government both at an ideological and practical level the Church sought continuously to repair any

[465] Sykes, 'Theology, Toleration and Conflict' in J.C.D. Clark ed. *Ideas and Politics in Modern Britain,* (Macmillan, London, 1990), 103 –115, 112
[466] Chittenden, 'The 'Faith in the City' report', 1985, 80
[467] Chittenden, 'The 'Faith in the City' report', 1985, 80
[468] Clark, *The Church Under Thatcher*, 97-8
[469] Clark, *The Church Under Thatcher*, 11

damage done, a perfect example of the leaders of the Church aiming to fulfil both the prophetic and pastoral (on a national scale) elements of the social witness which they saw as their duty. In the immediate aftermath of FITC a meeting between Kenneth Baker and the Archbishop of Canterbury served as one example of this policy.[470] In terms of policy too however the Church was keen to show that the Government had taken note of its recommendations with a view to altering policy. Here the success of the Church is less certain.

Bowpitt in his study of the impact of FITC on public policy while admitting that the report 'captured the mood of the nation', questions the actual impact on policy. He notes the fact that the inner city had undoubtedly been given a more prominent position on the government's agenda, as could be shown by Mrs Thatcher's well known election night outburst that something must be done about the inner cities, but comparing the recommendations of FITC to the Government's 'Action for Cities' programme bemoans the fact that the latter makes 'depressing reading'.[471] Still he notes the five year progress review *Living Faith in the City* 'put a charitable gloss on this dissonance between Government policy and the aspirations of *Faith in the City*' [472]. The Commission seemed to hope that if policy could not be changed it could be influenced but 'the impression is gained of oases of influence in a sea of Government indifference'.[473] Bowpitt however does not believe that FITC failed for the simple reason that although the Government may not have altered its policies as a result, in fact sometimes the opposite[474], the Government did after this point feel the need to 'take a religious perspective seriously in its policy deliberations' and the reason for this is because the Church has earned the right to be heard in two ways:

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[470] Medhurst and Moyser *Church and Politics in a Secular Age,* 296
[471] Bowpitt, Graham 'The Impact of Faith in the City' in Jones and Lansley (eds.) *Social Policy in the City,* Social Policy Association, 1993 – quoted in The Bishops' Advisory Group on Urban Priority Areas, *Staying in the City: Faith in the City ten years on* (Church House Publishing, London, 1995), 29
[472] Bowpitt, Graham '*The Impact of Faith in the City'*, 29
[473] Bowpitt, Graham '*The Impact of Faith in the City'*, 30
[474] The Bishops' Advisory Group on Urban Priority Areas, *Staying in the City: Faith in the City ten years on*, 47

> "partly because of the rigour with which it undertook the research on which its own proposals were based, but mainly because it is prepared to put its money where its mouth is and revive its own active involvement in inner city life."[475]

The success of the report comes down in other words to the emphasis in Anglican Christian Social Theory on the material nature of Christianity and therefore the need to address both the spiritual and the physical, to operate a ministry of prophetic and pastoral nature. In the case of FITC, the product of a committee endorsed by General Synod and representative of the whole Church therefore, success was also dependent on the manner in which the report was followed up and the way in which the Church at large responded to its challenges, unlike the pronouncements of individual bishops in this tradition which can only be assessed in the context of the individual life and ministry.

Of the sixty one recommendations in the report thirty eight were addressed to the Church and the central Church lost no time in responding to these. The Archbishop set up an advisory group to oversee the implementation of the report, chaired by a bishop and appointed an Officer for UPAs. Dioceses were also encouraged to appoint link officers to ensure the spread of the report and at a parish level links were set up between UPA parishes and more comfortable middleclass areas. This latter initiative was however not co-ordianted at a national level and depended heavily on the commitment of a few individuals. Many parishes waited until the introduction of the Church Urban Fund to respond to the challenge posed by the report by fundraising.[476] We can see therefore that for the most part the response to the report at a local level was cautious and that the national leadership of the Church prioritised the dissemination of the message of the report over the introduction of structural changes. There is some evidence that this tactic was successful. Evidence received for inclusion in the five year progress report *Living Faith in the City* from Winchester Diocese (a wealthy, southern diocese) for example, notes that:

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[475] Bowpitt, Graham '*The Impact of Faith in the City*', 30

[476] The Bishops' Advisory Group on Urban Priority Areas, *Staying in the City: Faith in the City ten years on*, 37-38, 3.3 – 3.8

> "...there is detectable some kind of important shift in attitudes and understanding as a direct result of the report – a recognition that the plight of the poor in Britain must be a central part of our understanding of the Gospel and cannot remain the concern simply of the radicals and social activists"[477]

It is interesting to note however that follow up initiatives which were seen by the Church as part of its internal follow up process were to have as much impact on external and/or secular bodies as on the Church itself, showing that the Church, even when addressing itself does not separate this ministry from its duty to the nation. Two clear examples of this are the follow up conferences held in the immediate aftermath of the publication of FITC and the more long term focus on interfaith co-operation. According to detailed research conducted by Farnell, the eighteen months after publication saw follow up conferences in no less than thirteen cities frequently taking place with the official support of local government and business and the participation of local universities.[478] Secondly the development of the notion of interfaith co-operation flourished in the years following the publication of FITC. *Living Faith in the City* stressed the need not only for collaboration between faith communities at a local level in working for the common good, but also for local congregations to be places where members of other faiths could feel welcome,[479] while ten years on the authors of *God in the City* claimed that when an interfaith reality is made part of the everyday life of a Christian congregation it can have transforming powers.[480] Perhaps the most telling example however was the establishment of an Inner Cities Religious Council[481]. The council was the result of correspondence between the Archbishop and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Department of the Environment, Robert Key MP looking for a better way for Church and Government to work together 'for the

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[477] The Archbishop of Canterbury's Advisory Group on Urban Priority Areas. *Living Faith in the City: A Progress Report,* (General Synod of the Church of England, London, 1990), 8. 1.26

[478] Richard Farnell, *'Faith in the City and Local Politics* (1988) – quoted in Clark, *The Church Under Thatcher*, 82

[479] The Archbishop of Canterbury's Advisory Group on Urban Priority Areas. *Living Faith in the City*, 138-9, 23.11

[480] David Ford in Peter Sedgwick, (ed.) God in the City: Essays and Reflections from the Archbishop's Urban Theology Group, (Mowbray, London, 1995), 206

[481] Henceforth ICRC

good of local communities in inner cities.'[482] It is a sign both of the social situation in a plural society and the adaptation of the Church's social thought to this reality that an interfaith body was the outcome, albeit one with a secretary drawn from the ranks of the clergy of the Church of England.[483] This thesis explores the relative emphasis in the Church on individuals and committees and it is therefore interesting to note that where the FITC committee process was sparked off by pressure from one individual the ICRC which indirectly resulted from it owes much to the active concern of another. This is a topic that has prompted and merits research in its own right in terms of how individuals within the Church can prompt a committee response and in this way influence national Church policy.[484] Although this subject could not be done justice here it is however of central relevance to this study. Although for the most part of this chapter emphasis has fallen on committee work individuals play a key role in ensuring the success of such ventures. It is the commitment and sense of duty of such individuals to a Christian understanding of social justice that has ensured its communal expression in the Church in an Anglican Christian Social Theory.

FITC and the follow up to the report itself, was as we have seen to a certain extent a product of its era both in terms of the theological trends to which it made reference and the societal and political trends which both informed and formed the Church's response. However it is clear that the social theory of the Church retains features which means it can be identified as a continuation of a distinctive line of Anglican Christian Social Thought.

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[482] The Bishops' Advisory Group on Urban Priority Areas, *Staying in the City: Faith in the City ten years on*, 94, 5.19 – 5.20

[483] The Bishops' Advisory Group on Urban Priority Areas, *Staying in the City: Faith in the City ten years on*, 94, 5.20

[484] on this topic see especially Jennifer M. Taylor, After Secularism: Inner city Governance and the new religious discourse. A Case study 1992-1998 (Phd Thesis, SOAS, 2002)

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Through detailed analysis of the doctrine and theologies of three proponents this study has shown that the ideal type of Anglican Christian Social Theory can be identified in their thought and social practice. In drawing out the common themes in these three objects of study this concluding analysis develops the ideal type of Anglican Christian Social Thought.

The theologies are not identical although they do have common themes. What is however striking is that the motivation for Anglican Christian Social Thought lies in a particular understanding of the Church/State relationship. This understanding is peculiar to the circumstances and historical background of the Church of England in terms of culture and theological tradition. This study has shown that in all of the objects of study it is not doctrine that drives, but rather the sense of obligation (in terms of individuals one could say vocation) to relate theology and theologically inspired moral values to issues in the world. It is, in other words, their own perception of the role of the Church in the nation underlining a belief in its obligation to interact with the state that is the defining and unchanging element of Anglican Christian Social Theory. The fact that this Social Theory has been developed and expounded by the intellectual elite of the Church, who have been shown to exhibit a sense of personal vocation towards political forms of leadership and the representation of the disadvantaged in the corridors of power serves only to confirm this premise.

Clark argues that the development of this rationale for the Church's right/ obligation to shape public policy was the first element of a threefold contribution which Temple made to the Anglican social tradition. The other two elements which he identifies are, Temple's introduction of the three stage method of moving from theology to moral principles and moral principles to guidelines in the process of constructing social theory and his ability to direct the attention of Church and Nation to particular problems through the use of

considerable administrative talents.[485] These three elements serve as definitive indicators of the presence of an Anglican Christian Social Theory.

The first of Clark's elements is the most significant not least because it shapes the rest of the tradition. An understanding of the firm belief held by the representatives of the tradition of Anglican Christian Social Theory, that the Church has both a right and a duty to play an active role in the development of public welfare policy at both local and national levels, is crucial to an understanding of the theory itself and of its practical application in the Church. As the studies have shown this can be attributed to physical presence of the Church amongst the poor at a parish level and its simultaneous presence in Westminster which led not only to a confirmation of her belief that she had a particular role to play in the nation, but ensured the parallel development of this role and thus also of Anglican Christian Social Theory along both pastoral and prophetic lines.

The second focuses attention on the method employed by those who represent the tradition of Anglican Christian Social Theory and which is itself an integral part of the theory. It has been shown that all those studied adopt a method which applies theological principles to policies directly relevant to issues of the day. This is rooted in their understanding of the right and duty of the Church to contribute its particular expertise to public debate. Temple focused on 'middle axioms' and was cautious in moving beyond this, but even he suggested more detailed policies in the appendix of his '*Christianity and Social Order*'. Jenkins and FITC were more outspoken and less cautious about entering into detailed technical debate, but this reflects a change in application of the principle, rather than a change in essentials. Temple believed it was important to develop middle axioms so that individual Christians could apply them in their working lives, but Temple assumed he was addressing, a nation of churchgoers and therefore a population whose moral values were grounded in the Christian values which he took as his starting point. Temple could, in other words, assume a certain degree of moral consensus in the nation where as Jenkins and

[485] Clark, Henry, *The Church Under Thatcher,* (SPCK, London, 1993), 19

FITC reflect the more prophetic stance of a Church which knows it is addressing a more diverse population, where if there is an Anglican majority in any form it is a 'secular' one. For Jenkins and FITC therefore the role of the Church must of necessity stretch to include this second stage, the move from middle axiom to policy and detailed/ specific recommendations, if it is to make a significant impact on national policy. This explains the emphasis of the Church in the modern era on becoming conversant and knowledgeable about empirical realities and current secular thought, as seen in the work of Jenkins and FITC.

The third element refers to the ability to direct Church and Nation to issues of concern. Temple made use of committees to this end and was therefore not only adept at drawing attention to social injustice in his own day, but left a legacy in the structures of the Church which resulted in the committee processes which themselves produced FITC. Jenkins, represents the opposite end of the spectrum and the ongoing importance of outspoken public figures, particularly from within the episcopacy, to the continuation of the Anglican Christian Social Tradition. The interaction between individual and group is, as ever, complex, but as the study of FITC showed, although the Church in the later decades of the twentieth century moved increasingly towards committee decision making processes, the role of the individual Christian remained much the same in practice. The bishops in particular retained, for a number of reasons explored in this study, their roles as influential public figures and in their embodiment of the Church/State connection remain an integral part of the formation and presentation of any Anglican Christian Social Theory.

These three indicators highlight the sociological element of the ideal type, however a second crucial element that the studies have drawn to attention is the central importance of the theological element of the ideal type to Anglican Christian Social Theory. Although it is still true to say that the theologies of Temple, Jenkins and FITC are in some respects very different the perception of the central role of theology as a foundation to moral political thought is common to them all and the key themes which unite these theologies, not only reflect the elements of a Anglican theological tradition, but also highlight the

essential Anglican Christian element of the social theory for those engaged in its formation. A key example of this is the theologically grounded understanding of the role of the individual Christian in society present in the thought of Temple, Jenkins and FITC. It is expressed differently by the individuals who represent this tradition, so while Temple envisaged the role of the laity as a working out of Christian principles in everyday life, Jenkins and FITC assume a more active role for the laity in the formation of social thought both at local and national level, but essentially this difference only reflects the social situations in which they developed their ideas.

Crucially the individual is, perceived as exercising an important role in the community at both national and local levels, only emphasis is not on people as individuals, but rather as members of communities. A strong trend in Anglican theology is built upon, as understandings of the nature of Christian community in the early church are applied to twentieth century England. Communities are perceived as having intrinsic value because of the fact that through the relationships which they support the material and spiritual well-being of all people can be enhanced and salvation be worked out. Salvation is in other words understood to be collective so expressions of Christianity which emphasise an individualistic interpretation of faith relevant to spiritual, but not temporal issues are rejected outright by the exponents of Anglican Christian Social Theory. From here it is only a short step to a theological argument for political Christianity and it is a step which the proponents of this social theory take.

For Jenkins and FITC Liberation theology acted as a catalyst towards the articulation of this form of theology in the English context and it has therefore been identified by some as a foundational element in their thought and therefore in Anglican Christian Social Thought at the end of the century, however it can be seen that the roots of the theological basis for social political thought within the Anglican context can be found deeper in the Anglican tradition and before the advent of Liberation theology. The influence of platonic philosophy, as expounded in an earlier chapter in relation to Temple's thought, with its emphasis on the valuing of human relationships and rejection

of the objectification of individuals is evidence of the fact that what are often perceived to be Marxist elements in later social thought are in fact common to the philosophical basis of all Anglican Christian Social Theory.

That this study has spanned the twentieth century has served only to highlight the fact that a clear notion of Anglican Christian Social Theory can be identified. It is true that where Temple was addressing, what could be described as a Christian nation and a certain consensus built around Christian values, Jenkins and FITC were acting in an environment where the ideology of the New Right, individualism and plural society had had a distinct impact on the perception of the role of the Church by the general public. Whether the shift in the intervening period was as sudden and dramatic as Callum Brown claims is still open to question, but this study has none the less shed light on the fact that there was a marked shift as regards public consensus on social values during this time, although the Church, as is evident in FITC was not always ready to admit it. This ostrich like action may to some extent be attributable to the fact that the Church's perception of itself as duty bound to serve the nation, with some measure of responsibility for all citizens, did not alter during this period as she as an established Church sought to preserve her position.

The differences in approach therefore between Temple and Jenkins and FITC can be attributed to the subtle impact of these societal shifts on the Church. Where Temple believed in the duty of the Church to speak and act on social issues and in its right to be heard, Jenkins and FITC believed it was the Church's duty to speak out, but were aware that her right to be heard was less clear cut and that increasingly she was one voice amongst many. This explains the increased focus in the closing decades of the century on the need for ecclesiastical comment to be grounded in a good grasp of the empirical facts. A further example of the fact that while the basic premise of Anglican Christian Social Theory, that the fundamental questions of contemporary society are primarily theological, remains unchanged the language and methods which the Church used to address these issues altered in response to social conditions

These factors common to a tradition of Anglican Christian Social Thought have emerged in the course of this study and prove that although methods of ecclesiastical interaction with society in welfare issues have altered during the course of the twentieth century the underlying theological beliefs and social values held by influential members of the academic leadership of the Church as regards the role of the Church in society have not changed. So the academic work and pastoral ministry of these individuals and groups serves as evidence that this distinct tradition defined as the ideal type of Anglican Christian Social Theory has characterised the Church's official response to social injustice throughout the twentieth century.

Anglican Christian Social Thought in the Twenty First Century?

Davey is convinced that new social factors at work in the nation today mean that analyses of the work of Jenkins and FITC will be of little value to a new generation of social thinkers within the Church of England,[486] but as this study has shown Jenkins and FITC are not simply representatives of a generation of social thought formed in response to conditions at the end of the twentieth century, but can be seen as one element in a longer line of Anglican Christian Social Thought. In the light of this it can therefore be argued that an understanding that this line of social thought is characterised, not by the context to which it was responding, but by factors relating to the established nature of the Church and the Anglican theological tradition is vital to any future social thinker who wishes to influence the social thinking undertaken by the Church at an official level. Any attempt to introduce new methods of social thought and to fundamentally alter the way in which the Church responds to social injustice must be prepared to challenge basic beliefs as regards the role of the Church in the nation and the Anglican theological tradition as well as addressing contemporary social factors. It must do so because it is the complex interaction of these two factors that define the tradition of Anglican Christian Social Thought and as this study has shown in the twentieth century, at least, this and not the particular social situations with which the Church was faced characterised its response to social injustice.

[486] Andrew Davey, *Urban Christianity and Global Order,* (SPCK, London, 2001), 9

The new social situations facing the Church of England in the twenty-first century may of course have a significant impact on the social thought of the Church and so as we approach the twentieth anniversary of the publication of FITC it remains only for this thesis in having established the existence of a distinct line of Anglican Christian Social Thought in the twentieth century to point the way to an exploration and testing of this ideal type in the thought world of the twenty-first century.

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